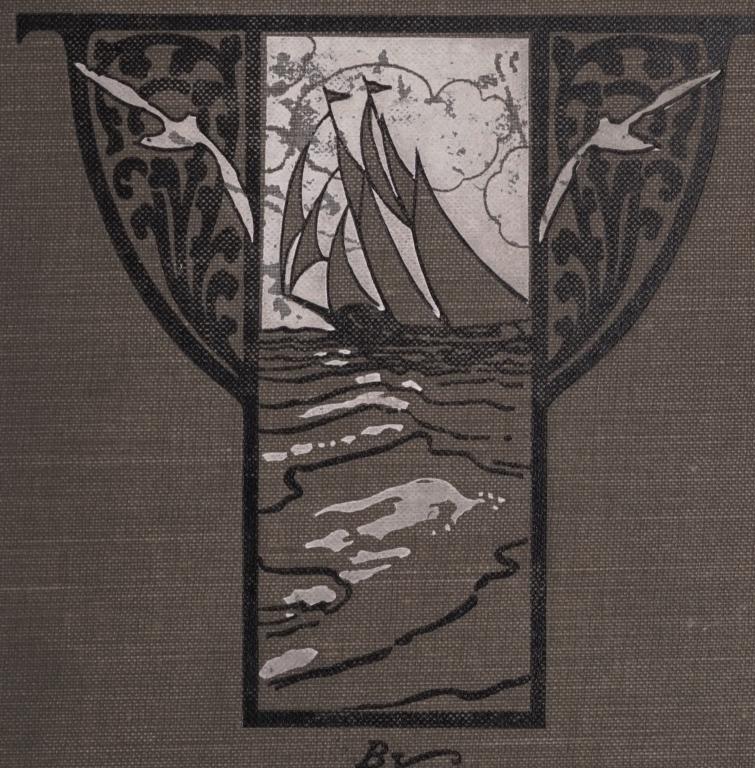
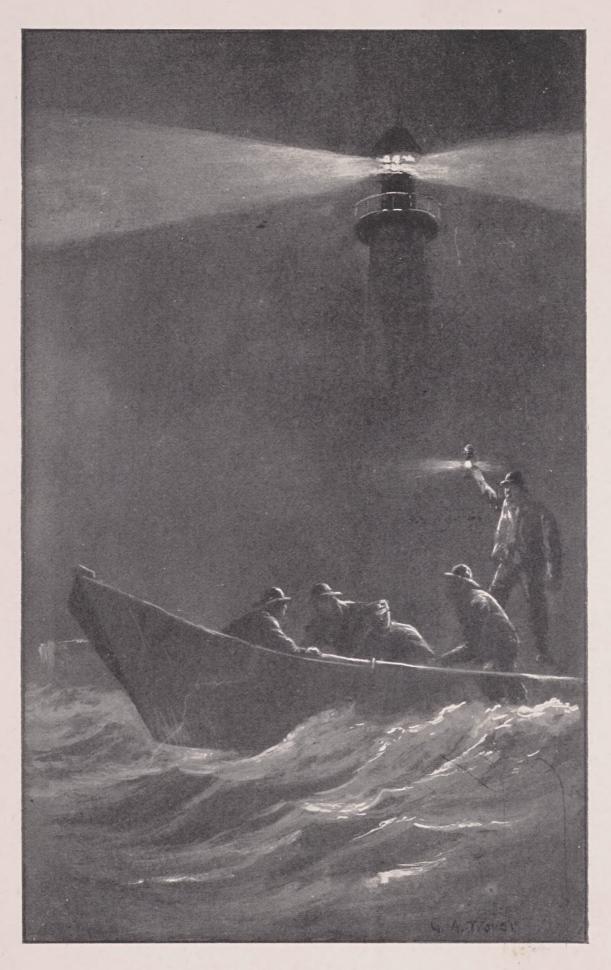
ABOARD THE HYLOW



JAMES OTIS



LEAVING SABLE ISLAND

ABOARD THE HYLOW ON SABLE ISLAND BANK

JAMES OTIS Kaler.

AUTHOR OF "THE LIGHT KEEPERS," "THE LIFE SAVERS," ETC.



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ABOARD THE "HYLOW" ON SABLE ISLAND BANK.

CHAPTER I.

DISTRICT MESSENGER ONE-ONE-FOUR.

Tim Jones should have gone directly back to the office after delivering the message, and no one was better aware of such fact than Tim himself. It was well known among the corps of district messengers at the station on Exchange Street that No. 114 could never resist the temptation, when in pursuance of duty he found himself on one of the piers, and many times had the manager distinctly told him that unless he reformed in this respect his services would be dispensed with regardless of the commercial interests of the city.

Tim Jones had not entered the employ of the Western Union Telegraph Company with any idea

of distinguishing himself in that particular field of labor. It had become necessary, so his mother declared, that he earn something toward the support of the family, and she had been very emphatic in her refusal to allow him to become a sailor.

Tim's one desire was to ship, in whatsoever capacity might be possible, on one of the many vessels sailing from Portland; given his choice he would have preferred to have become a fisherman; failing in an advantageous opening in that career, he was willing to join any vessel, believing firmly that he was destined by nature to become one of the most skilful, daring, and successful ship-masters known in history.

However, Tim's mother stood between him and his great ambition, and, as has been said, whenever his duties as district messenger carried him to the water front of the city, he spent much more time in admiring the fishermen, coasters, and yachts, than the rules of the office permitted.

Now all this is by way of explanation as to how Tim Jones chanced to be on Custom-House wharf at nine o'clock in the morning on the fifth day of last May, having delivered a message to Messrs. Leavitt & Bangs, dealers in fish, fully half an hour before the moment when he began to play a part in this story.

Tim had been spending the time, which rightfully

belonged to the telegraph company, in inspecting a new addition to the fishing fleet which lay alongside the pier near the office he had visited. In order to satisfy himself thoroughly regarding this new craft, it seemed necessary he should gain a point of view on the opposite side of a large number of casks which had been tiered up as if to be put on board this particular vessel which had attracted his attention. Almost any other lad would have walked around the obstruction; but Master Jones was ever ready to show his agility, believing it his one strong recommendation in case he should ever be so fortunate as to ship as a sailor, and therefore clambered directly over the top.

In so doing he discovered, much to his surprise, in a space which had been left by the awkward stowing of the casks, a lad apparently about his own age, who seemed to be in hiding there.

"Hello," said Tim, coming to a full stop with the air of one who is not pressed for time. "Who sent you below so early in the morning?"

The stranger looked up as if in alarm, but made no reply, and Tim clambered down among the casks until standing face to face with this fellow who to his mind was acting so oddly. Then, deliberately taking a newspaper from his pocket, he folded it carefully, saying half to himself:

- "I'm a duffer if you ain't the very fellow!"
- "Have they got it in there?" the stranger asked with every evidence of alarm.
- "True as you live. I was readin' it this mornin', an' thinkin' what a mighty lucky kid you was."
 - "Did they send you to hunt for me?"
- "Of course they didn't. I don't go 'round huntin' for folks. I'm Messenger One-one-four, an' came down here on business; but of course the steamship people are goin' to stop you if they can. Mike Ahearn told me it was a mighty serious thing for them to lose a fellow like you. There was a man here last winter who got away, an' I don't know how many hundred dollars the company had to pay 'cause he skipped."
- "Did they catch him?" the stranger asked eagerly.
- "I did n't ask Mike about that; but see here, why would n't they let you land?"
 - "Don't it tell in the paper?"
- "Perhaps it does. I did n't have time to read it over more 'n once."
- "Look an' see. It may be I ain't the fellow you think I am."

Tim looked carefully over the paper, passing the end of a much soiled finger down each column until having found that which he sought, and then, with no slight difficulty, for Master Jones was not a highly educated lad, he read the following, spelling out the long words and giving to others a pronunciation which would not have been recognized by ordinary students:

"Another Case of Deportation.

"When the steamship Levonia arrived yesterday morning there was among her passengers a boy of fifteen years old or thereabouts who, if his story be true, is in a sad plight. His name is Seth Garland, and he claims to have been born in Meredith, New Hampshire. According to his story, his father died two years ago, and his mother, an English woman, took him with her to Liverpool where her parents reside. Two months ago Joshua Garland, the lad's uncle, visited the old country, and then decided, with the consent of the mother, to legally adopt the lad Seth, intending to bring him home—but where, the boy is unable to say.

"Now it seems, and in this portion of the story the purser of the Levonia bears out the lad's statement, Joshua Garland secured second-cabin passage on the Levonia for himself and his nephew, paying for the tickets several days in advance of the day of sailing. These passengers came aboard the steamer two hours before the advertised time for departure, and, so the

boy says, Mr. Garland left him in their cabin, stating that it was his purpose to go ashore to transact some business near by the dock. Certain it is he went ashore, and equally certain that he failed to return; but whether by accident or intention it is impossible to say. The stand which the Immigration Commissioners take is that the uncle intended to abandon the boy, although that seems hardly probable inasmuch as he paid for two tickets when he might equally as well have purchased only one. However that may be, when the *Levonia* arrived the boy was detained, and, in fact, there was nothing else which could well be done since he was penniless and had no idea as to where his uncle lived.

"Communication was at once opened with the authorities at Meredith, where young Garland said he was born, but no person of that name is residing there. The result is that the steamship company will be forced to hold the lad during the stay of the Levonia in port, and then take him back to Liverpool."

"Yes, that's me—I'm Seth Garland," the stranger said when Tim ceased reading. "They're goin' to send me back, when I know my Uncle Joshua will come over on the very next steamer he can catch, for he told mother he had considerable money, an' was willin' to give me a chance to make my way in the world."

"If they're goin' to send you back, how does it happen you're sneakin' in here among these barrels?" Tim asked as he rubbed his nose reflectively. "I thought when a fellow was n't allowed to land in this country, the folks what owned the steamer had to look after him mighty sharp else they'd get into trouble with the President."

"They locked me up in the cabin last night, an' said I had to go back. Would n't even let me go on the dock; but it was no kind of a trick to get the door opened with this," and Seth took from his pocket a horseshoe nail which had been bent to form a picklock. "I crept out before daylight this mornin', an' did n't know where to go. Must have walked much as an hour when I brought up here. Of course when the sun came up I had to hide somewhere. Am I very far from the steamer?"

"Well, I reckon you could walk down to her dock in three minutes, an' not hump yourself very much at that."

"I thought I must be miles an' miles away from her!"

"Well, say, a fellow that can get mixed up in a little old burg like this can't have done much travellin.' Why, I could go 'round it with my eyes shut."

"Perhaps you could n't if it was the first time you was ever in the town," Seth said mournfully, and then ensued a time of silence during which Tim stroked his chin as he gazed almost enviously at this lad who, without having committed any offence against the laws of the country, was actually fleeing from the officers of the law.

"Well, you've got off so far," Tim said finally, an' now what're you goin' to do?"

"That's just what I don't know. I won't go back to Liverpool if I can help it, 'cause Uncle Joshua will be comin' over mighty soon, an' if I could get a letter from mother she'd tell me where he lives."

- "Got any money?"
- "Not a penny."
- "I don't reckon you had any breakfast, seein' as how you lighted out from the steamer so early."
- "I can go hungry a good long spell rather than let them take me back. Say, can't you tell me where is a good chance to hide?"

Tim studied over the matter before replying, and then it was as if a happy thought came to him, for he cried suddenly:

"Say, it strikes me you've got the chance of your life! I'd give a pile if I had it; this vessel layin' right in sight of you is the *Hylow*, an' she's a corker! Captain Ben Willard built her for a fisherman, an' I heard them say, back there in the office,

that she was likely to leave between now an' tomorrow mornin'. These barrels are goin' aboard her.
They're filled with bait. Now it'd be the easiest
thing in the world to sneak on board her an' get into
the hold. I'll bet you great big money they'd
never find you, an' if it was n't for mother I'd
go partners with you; but no, I 've got to hang
'round here an' be One-one-four for four dollars a
week, when I might start in as a fisherman an' be
somebody."

"What kind of a man is this Ben Willard?" Seth asked, as if he was seriously considering the suggestion.

"Who? Captain Ben? Why, he's a dandy! He'll bring back more fish than any other man that goes to the Banks, an' his vessels don't lay at anchor waitin' for a crew, I can tell you. By jimminy! I wish I was you!"

"I wish you was," Seth said with a long-drawn sigh. "If you think it's any fun to have to go back to England, where mother's just about as poor as poor can be, when you had a chance to live with your Uncle Joshua, it's a pity you can't have a piece of it."

"Well, go off on the Hylow, an' by the time you get back your Uncle Joshua'll be here. I'll keep my eye out for him."

"How long do you suppose I'll have to hide in the hold before I can get out again?"

"Well, if they have any kind of weather it can't be more 'n two or three days. Look here, Seth," and now Tim assumed a business-like tone as if he had mapped out the entire scheme in his mind. "If you go fishin' of course you'll make lots of money, 'cause they tell me that Captain Ben takes his men on shares. Now I ain't so terribly well heeled; but I know mother'd be willin' to have me help you out of the scrape, an' I'll do it. I'll go back to the office, an' tell them that I'm terrible sick, then I'll snoop 'round to get somethin' for you to eat. If there's a chance, sneak right down into the hold. You don't want to loaf 'round here any, 'cause there 's no tellin' when the officers of the steamer'll be lookin' for you, an' the crew'll more 'n likely put these casks aboard in a little while. I'll find you out wherever you are, an' fix you up for the voyage. Then when you come back, it'll be a case of payin' me off."

"I'll do it too," Seth said earnestly. "The very first money I can earn shall be yours if you'll only help me now."

"I'll do what I can, but you've got to wiggle quite a bit yourself, old man, 'cause it ain't no slouch of a scrape you're in. Now remember what I told

you, an' get into the hold just as quick as you can. I'll be back before night."

Then Master Jones set off in the direction of Exchange Street, and if any of his business associates had chanced to see him at that time they would have been decidedly surprised, if not alarmed, because of the rapid progress he made through the streets.

It is to be regretted that Tim Jones did not look upon a wrong story such as he intended telling the manager in a very serious light; he allowed that the end justified the means, and had a vague idea that a lie was not a lie until it had been found out.

"I suppose you will have to get off if you are sick," the manager of the office said when Tim, in a faltering voice, had said that he was suddenly "took bad"; "but I've got my eye on you, One-one-four, and have had it there since your grandmother was ill and needed you for a nurse. We'll give you a chance to loaf if you put up many more games."

"Who's a-puttin' up games?" Tim asked indignantly. "Do you think jest 'cause I've hired out for four dollars a week I ain't got the right to have an ache in my stomach?"

"Go on, and see to it that you are back here at six o'clock to-morrow morning."

Tim obeyed, walking feebly as if his strength had already forsaken him, until having turned the corner

into the alley, when he set off at full speed for his home on Kennebec Street, arriving there, heated and breathless, much to the surprise of his mother.

In his eagerness to tell the story quickly he lost no little time, for she was forced to ask many questions in order to get at a thorough understanding of the situation, and very serious did the good woman look after having gathered all the supposed facts.

"Of course I ain't sayin' a thing against your helpin' a poor lad what's in trouble, Timmy, for that's your duty in this world, as I look at it; but I'm thinkin' you had better wait till your father comes home, an' we'll see what he has to say."

"What's the need of waitin' for him?" Tim asked impatiently. "He won't be here till twelve o'clock, an' before that time the folks from the steamship company may gobble up Seth."

"I'm not so certain, Timmy, but that you'd be gettin' yourself into trouble by doing this thing. The officers might put you in jail for helping a boy run away like that."

"Now see here, Mother, don't let anything of that kind worry you. I can waltz 'round any policeman in this town. Who 'll know I'm helpin' him? I'm goin' to do it on the sneak, an' it'll be a good job too! I made thirty cents this mornin' outside of my week's pay. Do you think that'll buy bologna

enough for him to eat while the Hylow is gettin' out to sea?"

"Thirty cents' worth of bologna would go a good ways toward stayin' even a growin' boy's appetite," Mrs. Jones replied thoughtfully, forgetting her fear that Tim might get into difficulty with the officers of the law by thus aiding the fugitive. "I can spare him quite a bit of bread an' butter, an' doughnuts, so you can put your money into hearty food."

"All right," Tim replied as if he was doing his mother a favor by thus allowing her to assist him, when, as a matter of fact, the one great reason why he had told the story was that he believed she would propose to add something to the stowaway's outfit. "I wish you'd hump yourself, 'cause Seth can't stay out there on the dock very long."

"But what about tellin' your father, Timmy?"

"What's the use of hangin' round here to do that? You can give him the whole yarn when he comes home, an' perhaps I'll be back by that time. Anyway, it won't do to wait a great while."

Mrs. Jones's sympathies had been aroused by the story which her son told regarding Seth Garland, therefore because of such fact she put aside the possibilities suggested by prudence, and set about making ready a fairly generous store of food.

Tim was too much excited to remain silent while

his mother was working; from his point of view the lad who would thus be forced to stow away on board a fishing vessel was one of this world's fortunates, and again and again did he reiterate the wish that he might be permitted to join Seth in his somewhat desperate undertaking.

"I'm not allowin' but that a fisherman's callin' is an honest one," Mrs. Jones said as she spread a generous amount of butter upon the overly thick slices of bread. "The trouble with sailors generally is that they're a shiftless lot, an' as much as your heart is set on goin' to sea, I can't bear the thought of it. Your father an' I are hopin' you'll get into some business ashore where you can become a prosperous man."

"Don't you call Cap'n Ben a prosperous man?"
Tim interrupted.

"Why, certainly; but then he owns three or four vessels, an' is master of one of them."

"Well, how do you suppose he got there? Workin' in a telegraph office for four dollars a week? He had to go to sea same as other fellows did. I bet he ain't shiftless when he comes ashore! Look here, Mother, Mike Ahearn's brother Bob earned a hundred an' sixty dollars last year on the Banks, an' he's gettin' a better lay this season with Captain Ben. Mike says he'll make three or four hundred dollars if the

Hylow comes back with a full fare. While he's doin' that I'll be just nothin' but One-one-four, gettin' about enough to pay for my uniforms and shoes."

"It's no use to talk, it's no use. I won't allow you to go as a sailor, leastways, until you're older."

Then, as if realizing for the first time that Tim was at home during working hours, she asked suddenly:

"How is it you're out of the office?"

"Well, you see, Mother, I did n't feel very well in the first place, 'cause the sun's mighty hot when a fellow's runnin' 'round town. Then again, I had to help Seth, an' I could n't do it if I stuck to my job."

"So you'll lose nearly a full day's pay?"

"Well, I will if they 're mean enough to hold it out when a fellow 's sick, an' I should n't think they 'd do that!"

At this moment Mrs. Jones, having made ready the store of food for the stowaway, came to understand that her son had told an untruth in order to assist the friendless lad who was hiding among the casks of bait on Custom-House wharf. As a matter of course it was her duty to read the boy a lesson on the subject of honest speaking, and this she began to do very earnestly, almost tearfully, but Master Tim was in far too much of a hurry to listen just then.

"You'll have to wait till I get back, Mother, indeed you will. After I've fixed Seth so he's all right, I'll come home an' you shall have it out; but I don't think it's so bad to say I was sick, as to let them carry that poor fellow to Liverpool when he could go fishin' with Cap'n Ben Willard."

Tim had gained possession of the package of food while speaking, and before his mother could make reply left the house at full speed, literally trembling with apprehension lest the lad who the Immigration Commissioners had decided must be deported was already a prisoner again.

His fears were increased rather than diminished when, arriving at the pier, he found the crew of the Hylow already putting aboard the casks of bait, and Seth nowhere in sight. To his mind it would have been in the highest degree imprudent to ask boldly if any one had seen a stray lad in the vicinity, and yet it was necessary he should know as soon as might be whether Seth had succeeded in gaining the schooner's hold.

While he stood there irresolutely, gazing at the beautiful little vessel with a desire to go on board of her plainly written on his face, the master of the Hylow came down the dock. Tim was not personally acquainted with this tall, thin man, whose browned face told of exposure to sun and storm, and who wore an expression of satisfaction with the world in general and himself in particular; but he had met him

many times, and always with the hope that the most successful sailor out of Portland might become so impressed with his abilities as to offer him a berth aboard one of his vessels.

"Rouse that bait in there lively, boys, there's no time for sogerin' with this wind! You need n't try to make very snug storage, for if the luck holds we'll soon have them casks unheaded."

Then the captain went on toward his office farther down the pier, and Tim understood that if he was to search for Seth now was the opportunity to gain permission.

"Can I go aboard your vessel, sir?" he cried, running along by the side of the tall man in order to attract his attention.

"Want to see the Hylow, eh? All right, lad, go aboard, but don't get into mischief, an' have a care not to meddle with what don't concern you."

Tim turned back, and was over the rail in a twinkling, coming to a stand by the combing of the hatchway.

No more than four or five casks yet remained to be taken aboard when, at a favorable opportunity, he scrambled down by aid of the fall and tackle, holding the store of food so tightly under one arm that the bread and doughnuts must have been pressed into a comparatively solid mass. "What're you doin' down here, kid?" a familiar voice cried as he scrambled over the casks, and when his eyes had become somewhat accustomed to the gloom of the hold, Tim uttered a cry of delight as he recognized Bob Ahearn, the brother of his friend.

"Cap'n Ben said I might look at the Hylow," Tim replied, feeling positive he would not be sent ashore immediately, and Bob Ahearn, more intent on his work than upon the visitor, said gruffly:

"Goin' into the hold of a schooner is a queer way of lookin' at her, but everybody to his taste. Move lively, lad, and see that you don't get a tumble."

CHAPTER II.

IN HIDING.

The hold of the *Hylow* was broken at the bow by a small cuddy which served as the cook's quarters, and aft was the cabin, or living quarters of the crew. Both of these compartments were shut off from the hold by a stout bulkhead. The casks of bait, barrels of salt, and of water, made up all of the cargo which the *Hylow* was to take from port. The provisions were stored in what in larger vessels would be called the lazaret, meaning that space between the floor of the after-cabin and the skin of the vessel.

Therefore it was that Tim Jones would have little difficulty in ascertaining the whereabouts of Seth Garland, if so be that lad had not already been carried back to the *Levonia*, but he could not loiter around in the hold as if searching while Bob Ahearn and his mate were stowing the casks, lest they should suspect his purpose.

Still pressing the package of food tightly under his arm, he went forward and aft in an aimless way, clambering over the casks and barrels as if bent on ascertaining the condition of the ship's timbers, until, fortunately, as it seemed, some one on the pier called to Ahearn, and his helper followed him on deck, leaving Master Jones alone in the hold.

Now was come his time, and believing it would be limited he moved quickly around, calling in a cautious tone the name of the boy he was so eager to befriend.

At the very moment when Tim had come to believe that the officers of the law had captured the lad, he saw dimly, in the gloom of the after part of the hold, a small figure rise up from amid the tier of water-casks, and his search was at an end.

"I've got some stuff here that mother sent," Tim began hurriedly in a whisper, "an' I'm goin' to spend thirty cents on bologna. I'd bought it on my way down, but I was n't certain whether you had kept out of sight of the steamship folks, so did n't want to take the chance of wastin' the money. I'll go right back for it as soon as I see how you're fixed."

Seth was not "fixed" in any very sumptuous manner. He had plunged himself into the first vacant space which promised to afford a hiding place, and this chanced to be very much the same as that on the pier—a small space between two of the casks and the bulkhead of the after-cabin.

"Well, this is what I call pretty snug," Tim said as he dropped over by the side of his friend, and so

small was the aperture that, when the two lads had stooped down to hide themselves from view of any who might come through the hatchway, they completely filled up the space. "No matter how much she may roll an' pitch you can't be knocked about a great deal."

"Do you suppose I'll have to stay here very long?" Seth asked anxiously, for he had already come to understand that this place was altogether too "snug" for comfort.

"Well, I reckon it can't be more'n two or three days if they have fair wind. You see she's got to run down to the Banks before they take the hatches off, an' it won't do for you to let on you're here till they've got to the fishing grounds."

"Where 'll I sleep?"

"Oh, there's plenty of chance for that. It would n't be a bad bed right here on these barrels. You see it ain't like as if the *Hylow* had a full cargo, for you've got all the room a fellow could want. I wish I was goin' with you!"

Just then the boys were startled by what sounded like a heavy blow on the deck, and at the same instant the hold was shrouded in darkness.

"What has happened?" Seth cried in alarm, and Tim replied in a matter-of-fact tone:

"They have only put on the hatch."

"Do you mean that they have shut us in here?"

"Nothin' to hurt. When I get ready to go I'll holler for Bob Ahearn to take off the hatch, or perhaps I could shove it up far enough to squeeze through."

Then Tim groped about with his hands to find a space between the casks sufficient to serve as a cupboard for his friend, and when this had been done he explained how the lad was to make himself comfortable.

"You've got to have some water, an' I'll bring it when I come with the bologna, if I can find a couple of empty bottles somewhere. You want to keep mighty quiet, 'cause if Cap'n Ben gets the idee that there's anybody stowed away here, there'll be the very old mischief to pay."

"But how're you going to get down here again with the water an' the bologna, if the hatch is on?" Seth asked anxiously, and Tim replied airily:

"Don't you bother your head about me. I'm a pretty good sailor, even if I never went to sea, an' you'll find I can snoop 'round most any of these vessels. Besides, there's Bob Ahearn; he's a friend of mine. I reckon Mike's brother an' Cap'n Ben would let me go anywhere I wanted to."

Then Tim began telling his companion what he would do if fortune had so far favored him that he

could play the part of stowaway as the first step toward becoming a ship's owner and master, painting such alluring pictures of a sailor's life that Seth forgot his own troubles as he sympathized with the lad who was not permitted, because of cruel-hearted parents, to thus fit himself for a fisherman.

In addition to explaining what he would like to do, and how cosey it would be if the two could stow away together, Tim had many stories to tell of acquaint-ances who had won fortunes, and, perhaps, honor in the fishing business, for he had used many such anecdotes as arguments when he tried to persuade his parents into allowing him to ship as a sailor.

District Messenger One-one-four had never succeeded in measuring time very accurately. He had loitered here or there when having been sent with messages, as inclination and fear of the officer-manager permitted, until he was really a spendthrift so far as the moments were concerned. On this occasion, when he had so much to say to his newly-found friend, there were so many fascinations for him while he remained snugly in the hold of the *Hylow*, that fully two hours must have passed before he bethought himself that it was necessary he purchase the bologna and procure the water in order to make certain Seth's voluntary imprisonment might not become painful.

As he clambered up on the casks it seemed to him that the schooner heeled slightly over, and there was a rippling, rushing sound along the sides of the hold; but so intent was Master Jones upon this scheme of baffling the Immigration Commissioners that he gave no heed to the matter until having groped his way to the stanchions supporting the combings of the hatch. Then it was he found that, stretch his arms as he might, it was impossible to reach the planking above him.

"You'll have to come here an' give me a boost up, Seth," he whispered hoarsely. "I did n't think, when I came down here, that the hold was so deep. I can't even touch the hatch."

Seth laid no claim to being a sailor, even though he had so lately landed from a voyage across the ocean, and considerable time was required for him to make his way over the casks, particularly in the darkness, to where Tim stood.

Then, following carefully the instructions of his friend, he lifted while Master Jones shinned up the stanchion, and acted the part of footstool when Tim pounded and pushed on the heavy hatch above him.

"Say, it don't give an inch," the messenger boy whispered impatiently. "Do you s'pose they have fastened it down?"

"I don't know what they do aboard fishing ves-

sels, for I never was on one before," Seth replied, failing to understand the possibilities of the situation.

"But I tell you we're locked down here!" Tim cried in alarm as he made one more effort to raise the heavy covering of planks before descending from his perch on Seth's shoulder. "Just like as not we'll have to stay here till to-morrow morning, an' I have n't got the water! Ain't it hot here! Don't you feel thirsty?"

"I could drink a little if I had it; but I'd rather have something to eat, 'cause I didn't get breakfast when I left the steamer."

"Well, it begins to look as if you'd have time to eat all you want before we get out of here. What do you s'pose mother'll think when I don't come home? We've got to do something to make 'em let me out of here. Can't you find a club so's we can pound on the deck an' let Bob Ahearn know where I am?"

It was by no means a simple matter to find anything in the hold, for there was no glimmer of light amid the darkness, and it was exceedingly difficult to make one's way over the tiers of barrels; but District Messenger One-one-four was becoming alarmed at being thus imprisoned, and made frantic efforts to find something which would answer his purpose. The bottom of the hold, however, was completely covered

by casks, and if there had been any pieces of timber lying around before the cargo was taken aboard, they would not now have been within reach of the boys. Search as they might, it was impossible to find anything which would answer their purpose, and when perhaps half an hour had passed, they having come once more to the stanchion under the hatch-combing, Tim exclaimed half in fear, half in what he intended should be a cheery tone:

"Mother'll think I ran away to be a sailor, an' it'll break her all up. Of course I can get out when the hatch is taken off in the mornin'; but between now an' then she'll have a pretty rough time of it. I didn't have any business to stay here with you as long as I did, an' I'm expectin' she'll cry her very eyes out before daylight."

Just then the *Hylow* heeled over perceptibly, and the sound of rushing waters grew louder, whereupon Seth cried as he clutched his friend by the arm:

"Do you s'pose the vessel has started?"

"Of course she has n't. Don't you suppose I'd know if she was ready to go to sea? The ferry-boat's just come in, an' that's what makes the big waves. She'll settle down again in a minute."

Much to Tim's surprise the *Hylow* did not "settle"; but, on the contrary, heeled over so suddenly that the boys were literally flung across the

casks, striking the side of the vessel with no gentle force.

"That's something more than waves made by the ferry-boat," Seth said ruefully as he pressed his hand gently on that portion of his head which had struck against the inner planking of the vessel, and straightway Tim began to shout:

"Bob! Bob Ahearn! Say! let me out of this! I've got to go home! Let me out!"

The vessel heeled yet more to the starboard, and then came a heavy blow against the bow as if the schooner had been struck by a huge wave, while the casks rubbed against each other, creaking moanfully, causing such a din that the lads were forced to shout in order to make their words heard.

"I tell you she's gone to sea!" Seth cried. "We must be out of the harbor by this time!"

Tim made no reply; he understood his companion had said only what was true, that he had the same as run away after having promised his mother again and again that he would never do such a thing, and the thought absolutely overwhelmed him.

"Why don't you say somethin'?" Seth cried nervously after two or three minutes had passed without the sound of a human voice. "Why don't you talk?"

"'Cause I can't!" Tim wailed. "Father always told me I'd get into trouble by wastin' my time, an'

now I have for sure! Why could n't I have had sense enough to go ashore after I found you was all right? Mother 'll just about cry herself sick, thinkin' I'm a liar, which I suppose I am sometimes, but I never meant to lie to her."

The creaking and moaning of the inanimate things in the hold, as if they, like Tim, were protesting against this sudden commencement of the voyage, was almost horrifying to the lad who believed, a few moments previous, that it would be fortunate for him if he had been forced to stow away on board the *Hylow*. His conscience cried out because of the wrong he had done his mother, and he was no longer the self-confident district messenger boy, but an unfortunate captive being carried away from home against his will.

It was not possible for Seth to enter very strongly into the grief of his companion, for he had his own sorrows to occupy his mind. He was thinking of his mother in England; of her grief when Uncle Joshua, on arriving, failed to find him; of the inhumanity shown by the Immigration Commissioners when he was debarred from remaining in the land of his birth.

How long the two lads lay half-wedged between the casks and the side of the schooner, they did not know. The day might have passed and another come without their knowing it, owing to the darkness of the hold.

It seemed to Tim as if he had been there fully twenty-four hours, when he began to realize the uselessness of giving way to grief while it could be of no avail.

"Look here, Seth," he said, gathering himself together, so to speak. "We are actin' like a couple of babies, that's what's the matter with us. Of course I feel mighty bad because mother's bound to believe I meant to run away when I went home to get the grub for you; but it won't change matters one little bit if we cry our eyes out. We've got to do somethin', an' that mighty quick."

"But what can we do?" Seth asked helplessly, all his courage having gone out into the blackness of the hold.

"That's just exactly what I don't know; but it's sure we must n't act like a couple of babies. Let's find the place where you was goin' to stay. We'll get somethin' to eat, an' then, perhaps, can think out what we ought'er do.

It was not a simple matter to find the hiding-place, for by this time the *Hylow* was not only heeled over to what seemed a dangerous point, but was jumping and tossing about as if bent on making matters as disagreeable as possible for the stowaways.

More than once were the two plunged headlong between the casks, or against the side of the vessel, and they were aching from many bumps and bruises when finally Seth tumbled into the narrow space they had been trying to gain.

Tim, determined to keep his courage up, strove to laugh because of his companion's fall, and did what he might toward pulling him to his feet, but there was very little mirth in the boy's heart when the two were seated on the deck between the barrels with their knees drawn up to their chins, for he understood full well how uncomfortable would be such a position in a short time.

"Seein's how we can't help ourselves, an' are both stowed away on the *Hylow*, we might as well have somethin' to eat," Master Jones said as he fumbled around till he found the package and opened it.

It was with great difficulty he could restrain his tears, for it seemed as if these slices of bread so thickly spread with butter were direct messages from his mother, bidding him remember the promise he had made never to go to sea without her permission.

"I reckon I ain't as hungry as I thought I was," he said, after trying in vain to swallow a mouthful, and finding the passage of the food stopped by the lump of grief which had come into his throat.

Seth, however, ate ravenously, for one full day had

passed since he tasted food, and without thinking that it might not be wise to draw so heavily upon the scanty supply, he satisfied his hunger fully, after which the situation seemed far less terrible than before.

"Now tell us some more of them stories about fellows that went to sea an' made so much money," he said, believing this would be a pleasant way of passing the time, and Tim replied mournfully:

"I can't do it; it's no use, I can't do it. Them kind of stories don't seem half as nice as when I thought there would n't ever be a chance of my goin' to sea. Look here, Seth, how long do you think it'll be before we can get home?"

"I hope we'll be away till Uncle Joshua can come."

"You bet we will! An' a good while longer than that! Why, there ain't much chance the Hylow will be back for three or four months! She'll stay at the Bank till she's plum full of fish, an', seein's how we're stowaways, there won't be a show of our makin' any money, for Cap'n Ben won't give us a share."

"Where is she bound for?"

"Why, the Banks, of course. Mike Ahearn says Cap'n Ben never goes anywhere else. I don't know but it's the only place where they can get codfish—I mean enough to load a vessel with 'em."

"What do you mean by the Banks?"

"Well, I don't know as I can tell you," Tim said hesitatingly, "'ceptin' that it's jest the Banks. I suppose it's shoal places in the sea off the coast of Newfoundland. I know there's lots of 'em, an' that they're down there somewhere. Anyhow, it's likely to be a good deal longer voyage than when you came over from Liverpool."

"What do you suppose the cap'n of this vessel'll say when he finds we're here?"

"Well, I was kind 'er allowin' if you stowed away alone, that when they came to find you Cap'n Ben would want to know how it happened. Then you could tell the whole story, an' they 'd feel the same way I did about helpin' you; but with me here too, it looks a good deal as if we'd have trouble, 'cause it ain't likely they want two boys aboard a schooner only an hundred and twenty tons."

"Is that a big vessel?" Seth asked, thinking more of the present than of that time when he must face Captain Ben as a stowaway.

"Yes, she's a ripper for a fisherman. I was lookin' her over when I happened to run across you. They do say she knocks everythin' that ever sailed out of Portland. The cap'n, he allowed to build a craft that should be a better boat, a better sailer, an' better all 'round than anything that was ever

launched on the coast, an' I reckon we shall have a chance to find out, if they don't dump us overboard, whether he has done it or not. See here, I'm gettin' thirsty. What are we goin' to do for something to drink? It may be a week before they'll find where we are."

"Don't, Tim, don't!" Seth cried. "There's no use in tryin' to think of all the terrible things that can happen to us. It's bad enough to be shut up here in the dark, with everythin' creakin' and groanin', and the ship tossin' about so badly! Seems to me it's a good deal worse than it was on the steamer."

Tim was beginning to feel rather queer in the region of his stomach, and as Seth spoke had a well-defined idea that he was growing sea-sick. It seemed to him such a weakness in a lad who, as he believed, was destined by nature as a sailor, was something of which to be ashamed, and he struggled against it as best he might while his companion speculated idly upon this thing or that, until it was no longer possible to conceal the fact.

"What's the matter?" Seth asked when his friend groaned dismally.

"Well, I'm sick, that's all there is about it! I would n't let on if it was n't that we're shut up here together where you could n't help findin' out."

"I know just how you feel," Seth replied unsympathetically. "I had it awful the first two days out from Liverpool, but I got over it, an' if it was n't for the noise down here I'd be gettin' along all right."

"Mother kept tellin' me I'd be sick if I went to sea, but I would n't believe her. She said most everybody was, but I allowed I was a reg'lar born sailor, an' it would n't make any difference how much the vessel tumbled 'round. By jimminy! I wish I was home! You can bet I'd waltz down to Exchange Street an' tend to business just as I ought'er, an' the manager would n't have a chance to tell me I had loafed on him! Perhaps if I was on deck it would be different, but here in this dark place, where there's such a screechin' an' howlin', anybody would feel bad. Say, Seth, if I should die, you'll go home an' tell mother I did n't mean to run away, won't you? You'll let her know just how it was; that we got shut up in here, an' I could n't help myself."

Seth promised faithfully to carry out his friend's dying wishes, if indeed they were such, to the best of his ability, and in order that the sick lad might have space in which to move about ever so little, he clambered up on one of the casks, leaving the "snug" hiding-place to the exclusive use of District Messenger One-one-four.

Tim struggled with the sickness, which well-nigh overpowered him, in silence for perhaps half an hour, and then, instead of gaining any relief, it seemed as if he was rapidly growing worse. He felt positive that never before had a lad been quite so ill as was he, and that the vessel should continue on her voyage while he was in such imminent danger of death was something that seemed woefully cruel and inhuman.

"You've got to make 'em know we're here, Seth," he cried in a tone of anguish. "They must take us out before I die!"

"How can I do it?" Master Garland asked helplessly. "You told me the hatch would n't be taken off till we got to the Banks, wherever that may be."

- "Pound on the deck."
- "I can't reach it."

"Then kick on the bulkhead for'ard, where the cook'll hear you. Seems to me if I was as well as you are, I could make racket enough to let 'em know that a fellow in here was dyin'!"

Seth made no reply to the petulant words, but meekly kicked to the best of his ability against the cabin bulkhead, and, although he worked vigorously, it was with difficulty that even Tim could hear the sound of the blows because of the overpowering noises in the hold.

"If you've got no more strength in your legs

than that, I'll have to die, that 'll be the end of me! Be sure to tell mother I did n't mean to run away."

Then Tim gave himself over, as he believed, to the embrace of death.

Tend they of America even on top of our U.S.

CHAPTER III.

CAPTAIN BEN.

For a time Tim insisted that his companion could, if he was so disposed, do that which would attract the attention of those in the cabin, or on deck, and then he gave himself wholly up, an unresisting captive, to the sickness of the sea, believing, and not greatly troubled by such belief, that death was standing near at hand to seize him at the first convenient opportunity.

Seth, so lately come from a long voyage, was not disturbed by the rolling and tossing of the Hylow, save when he was flung against this obstacle or that with a vicious force, as if the schooner was bent on punishing the venturesome lads who had hidden in her hold in defiance of the officers of the law; but all the while he allowed his mind to dwell upon the fact that there was no water which he could come at, and, as a natural consequence, his thirst increased until it seemed to him he was actually dying from thirst.

Then came a time when both of the stowaways slept; but the Hylow continued to climb the mount-

ains of water which the sea threw in her path, and descend into the liquid valleys, staggering now, and again seemingly being knocked back by a blow full in her teeth, until it was as if this fabric, fashioned with pride by Captain Ben Willard, had been endowed with consciousness only that it might be crazed by the mad whirl of wind and water.

Because the space between the casks, where Tim had believed a lad might live happily many days, was so "snug," District Messenger One-one-four was not flung about rudely; but he awakened now and then to wonder why it was he yet remained alive, and retaining sufficient of life to insist at the full strength of his lungs that Seth call Captain Ben without delay.

The lad who had escaped from the Levonia often aroused to consciousness; but he made no outcry, fearing lest the Hylow was yet so near the land that her master might send him aboard the Levonia, where he would be punished severely for having dared to make an effort at escape.

Finally, when it seemed as if he had been confined in that narrow space between the casks a full week, Tim so far gained a mastery over the nausea which had assailed him with such deathly force, that it was possible for him to relieve his cramped legs by standing as nearly erect as the narrow bounds of his place of refuge would permit, and then it was he began to believe he might be able to live a few hours longer.

The Hylow was no longer leaping about so insanely; she was heeled over to what appeared an alarming degree, and rose and fell on the waves, but the motion was more steady and regular. It was possible to guess with some degree of accuracy when she would soar upward, or when descend as if bent on plunging straight to the bottom, and, strange though it may seem, this apparent method in her movements caused District Messenger One-one-four to regain some slight portion of his former courage.

"Hi, Seth! Where are you?"

"Down here!" came the reply from somewhere on the starboard side amidships.

"Have you found any water yet?"

"How can I find anything while the vessel is jumpin' around so much? Have you stopped dyin'?"

"I guess I was more scared than hurt," Master Jones admitted with a tone of shame in his voice. "I've heard fellows tell about bein' sea-sick; but I've knocked 'round the docks so much that I did n't believe I'd get taken that way. How long do you reckon we've been here?"

"Two or three days."

"Then it's no wonder I'm hungry!" and Tim

began cautiously to clamber out from the "snug" quarters. "Did you eat all the stuff mother sent you?"

It was unfortunate for District Messenger One-one-four that he asked such a question, for the word "mother" stuck in his throat as if bent on choking him, and during a long ten minutes he gave himself up to painful thoughts of that best friend of his, who must even then be mourning in the belief that her son had wilfully run away from her.

"Have you begun to die again?" Seth cried in no little alarm as his companion remained silent so long, and Master Jones replied as he manfully swallowed the sob in his throat:

"I was thinkin' 'bout the folks at home, an' it makes me feel mighty mean, 'cause even if I did n't reg'larly run away, I would n't be here if I had n't loafed 'round tellin' stories when I ought'er been 'tendin' to business."

"It don't do any good to moon over them things," Seth said grimly. "When the Levonia started, an' I found that Uncle Joshua was n't on board, I come mighty near havin' a fit, thinkin' 'bout mother, an' him, an' what I'd do when I had to go ashore all alone with never a cent to pay my way. Then one of the stewards vowed he'd give me a rope's-endin' if I did n't stop bein' a baby, an' act as a boy of my

age ought'er. I knew he could do just what he'd threatened if I did n't brace up, an' it did me a power of good to behave more decently. That's what we'll have to do now, 'cause we can't get out till they take off the hatch——"

"There's a chance we'll starve to death before then!" Tim cried, now so thoroughly aroused to the dreadful possibilities as to forget for the time being both grief and sickness. "We've got to do somethin', Seth; it won't pay to lay 'round here like a couple of chumps. If we ever strike Portland agin mother'll know I didn't mean to tell her a lie, an' between now an' then I'm goin' to get a move on!"

"Well, go ahead an' do it," Seth replied, but without making any effort to change position, and a few seconds later he heard, even above the creaking of the timbers and loosely stowed cargo, a series of heavy thumps, which told that District Messenger One-one-four was kicking at the bulkhead vigorously and rapidly.

Then the pounding ceased suddenly, and Tim shouted at the full strength of his lungs:

"Bob Ahearn! Cap'n Ben! We're locked up in here!"

Again he fell to kicking, and Seth asked with mild curiosity:

"Do you reckon anybody can hear you while all this rumpus is goin' on?"

"They must have known I was kickin', for I heard a thumpin' on the other side."

This aroused Seth from what had been very like apathy, and, scrambling over the casks with no little difficulty, he joined his comrade, lying flat on his back as he beat upon the bulkhead with his heels.

Two or three minutes later it was possible to hear quite distinctly the sound of three blows, evidently given on the cabin-side of the timbers, and Seth cried excitedly:

"They 've heard us! They 've heard us! Pound three times, so 's to show we ain't ghosts!"

Tim acted upon the suggestion; the signal was answered, and the lad cried triumphantly:

"Now they know we're here, an' it won't be a great while before we'll have a chance to get out of this miserable place. Come on; let's go under the hatch where they'll be sure to see us the very first thing!"

The crew of the *Hylow* were evidently curious to learn what or who had disturbed them, for the two lads had hardly more than made their way to one of the stanchions which supported the hatch-combing, before the heavy barrier was pulled aside ever so little, allowing the blessed rays of the sun to enter

the dark hold in a narrow shaft, and never before had the light of day shone out so gloriously to the lads.

"Who's in there?" a gruff voice shouted, and Tim cried, leaping up and down to the best of his ability while the *Hylow* remained heeled over so alarmingly:

"It's District Messenger One-one-four, an' the follow what got away from the Levonia! We're jest about starved to death, an' we'll be dead for sure if you don't give us a drink of water!"

The hatch was pulled yet farther aside, revealing the wondering face of Captain Ben Willard, as he asked in a tone of surprise:

"How long have you been down there?"

"Weeks an' weeks!" Tim exclaimed. "We got shut in when you put the bait aboard!"

"Starved, eh? Dyin' of thirst, eh?" the captain said in what sounded like a mocking tone. "Have n't had anything to eat or drink since we left port, eh?"

"We had a little bit of grub; but Seth ate that the first day out," Tim replied, beginning to feel very feeble now that he was thus forcibly reminded of his sufferings. "We're dyin', an' that's the fact! Why don't you take us out?"

"I can't see that I'm called on to do anythin' of

the kind, seein's I did n't put you in. Stowed away on the Hylow, did yer? It would serve you well right if I kept you there till mornin', an' even then I'm allowin' you would n't have had a proper idee of what is comin' to stowaways. You're like to make expensive fishermen if you begin to starve to death in five or six hours!"

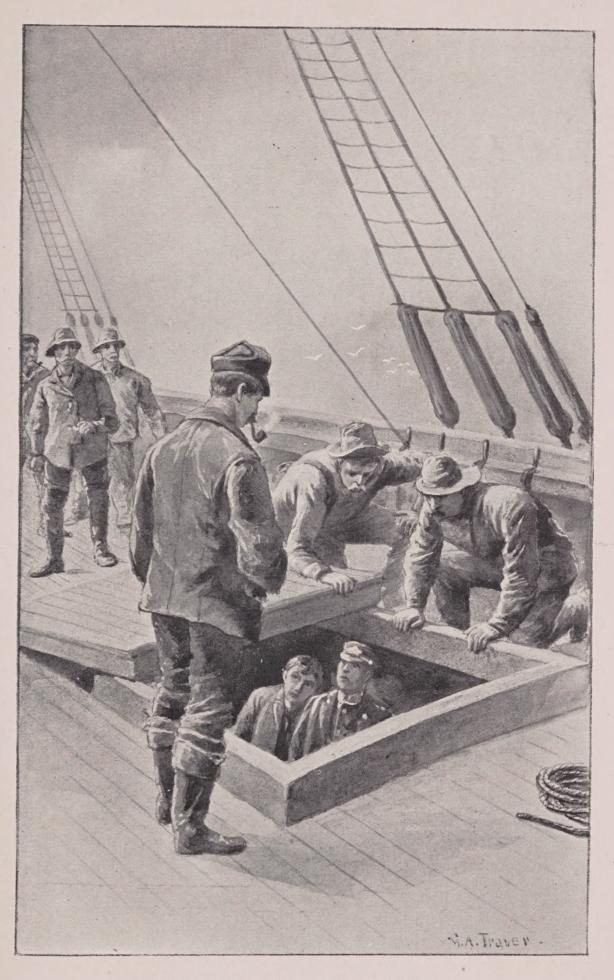
"Hours!" Tim repeated, clutching the stanchion nervously, for the surprise was even more overpowering than starvation. "How long since you left Portland?"

"We got under way somewhere before noon, an' it lacks a couple of hours of sunset," Captain Ben replied as he leaned over the combing in order to make out better to whom he was talking.

"Do you mean that we have n't been here more 'n a week?" Tim cried feebly.

"We have n't much more 'n got out of the harbor; the Cape lights are close aboard," Captain Ben said indistinctly, as if struggling with his mirth. "Lay hold here, a couple of you, an' let's see how near dead these stowaways are. We'll bring 'em to life with a rope's-end, I reckon, an' after that's been done they can be set adrift."

"What fools we've been!" Tim cried to Seth in a despairing tone. "Now's the time when we're goin' to catch it hot, an' what's worse, you'll have to



HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN DOWN THERE?



go back to the Levonia, while I'll get another dose from father!"

"Come out here you young scoundrels! I'm not goin' to do any coddlin' by comin' after yer!" Bob Ahearn cried as he lowered the bight of a rope into the hold. "Lay on to it lively, or I'll be givin' you a taste of what the cap'n 'll deal out!"

A glimpse of Bob's face, even though he had spoken in such an angry tone, cheered Tim wondrously, for there was the brother of his friend, who would not stand idly by and see him punished so very brutally; therefore he grasped the rope as a drowning man clutches at a plank, and straightway was hauled up on deck.

Involuntarily he glanced around to see how close aboard were the Cape lights, and, much to his surprise, could hardly make them out astern. The *Hylow* seemed to be well at sea, miles and miles past the light-ship.

"Who are you?" Captain Ben roared as if beside himself with anger, and Tim replied very meekly:

"I'm One-one-four, sir, an' I did n't mean to stow away on this vessel; but your crew put the hatch on too quick."

"One-one-four, eh? Is that all the name you've got? How did it happen you was in the hold?"

"You said I might look at the Hylow, sir."

"Oh, you're the messenger boy I saw on the dock, eh? Well, did I tell you to stow away?"

"I did n't do it, sir. I was only carryin' some grub to Seth, so's he could stay aboard where the steamship folks would n't find him."

"Who's Seth?" and now Captain Ben looked puzzled.

"That's him, sir," and Tim pointed with his thumb to a very disconsolate-looking lad who at that moment was hauled out of the hold. "The folks was goin' to send him back to England, an' he did n't want to go."

"Are there any more of your gang below?" the captain asked sternly, and Tim replied with a half-suppressed sob:

"We're all of 'em, sir."

"Well, you're two too many; the *Hylow* is n't runnin' pleasure excursions this season, nor she ain't likely to go into the business next year. Who's goin' to pay me for the loss of time in puttin' back to land you?"

"Seth don't want to go ashore till his Uncle Joshua comes, sir," Tim replied timidly, "an' you need n't go back on my account, even if I did promise mother I'd never run away. She's missed me long before this, so the worst of it is over."

"Who are you, anyway?"

"I'm One-one-four; but I'd rather be a fisherman than anything else in the world!"

"Look here, if either of you lads can give a straight account of who you are, with no funny business such as 'One-one-four,' I'd like to hear the story," the captain cried impatiently, and even a blind man might have seen that he was losing his temper.

"I'll answer for one of 'em," Bob Ahearn said quickly, and without waiting to be questioned he told the captain all he knew about Tim, thereby clearing up the mystery of "One-one-four."

By this time Master Jones began to understand that Seth's story should be told, and, with the aid of that young gentleman, he finally succeeded in giving Captain Ben a very fair idea of why Master Garland had secreted himself in the hold of the Hylow.

"It's dead bad luck to put back, especially on the first voyage of a new craft," one of the crew, whom the lads came to know as Ezra Snow, muttered sufficiently loud for the captain to hear. "I don't go in very strong on signs; but I want 'em to come right at the start."

"Look here, Ezra, you spend the greater portion of your spare time moonin' over signs an' omens," Captain Ben cried impatiently, "an' if you had n't contrived to come out mighty nigh high line every cruise, you an' me would have parted long ago. How does it come that, with all your runnin' 'cordin' to this superstition or that, you have n't got any further ahead in the world than when you made your first voyage with me?"

"That's jest the secret, Cap'n Ben!" Ezra said earnestly, shaking one stubby fore-finger in the air to give due emphasis to his words. "If it had n't been for that 'ere cruise I'd come out all right; but you know as well as I do 'bout that blamed old black cat."

"What cat?" Captain Ben roared impatiently, and Seth noted with secret satisfaction that the *Hylow* was steadily creeping away from the land while this controversy was continued.

"The one you useter own! I met her on your doorstep the night I went to ship with you, an' said to myself then that I ought'er turn back an' try some other time for a berth, for it's the deadest kind of bad luck to have a black cat rubbin' 'round your legs when you 're thinkin' of makin' a change. Black cats are all right after a man is settled down, for then some say they bring luck; but look out for 'em at the startin'. Do you remember, we sailed in the old Ellen Maria, an' did n't bring home half a fare, though we loafed around the Banks long after the squid had set in?"

"Yes, I remember, you superstitious old fool!" Captain Ben cried as if in a rage, displaying so much anger over a trifling matter that Tim began to believe all his show of ill-temper was make-believe with him. "I remember also that never a vessel of the fleet came into port loaded that season, an' I s'pose you'll say my old black cat made trouble for all hands?"

"She might have done it; I ain't sayin' that she did n't," Ezra replied doggedly, and Captain Ben turned once more to One-one-four, as if in despair of ever being able to wean Ezra from his superstitions.

"Now then, boy, I ask agin, who's goin' to pay us for loss of time, to say nothin' of the bad luck Ezra is so certain will follow, if we put the *Hylow* about to land you?"

"I don't believe anybody would give you very much, sir, 'cept it might be mother, an' when I left home she lacked two dollars of enough to pay the rent, so she could n't come up very big. Why don't you let us stay? After I get the hang of things I 'll bet I can earn more 'n enough to pay for my grub, an' Seth ought'er do as much."

Master Jones spoke very earnestly, and with a pleading tone. Under no circumstances could he have been persuaded to run away from home after making his mother such a positive promise; but now that he had been run away with, so to speak, it

seemed as if he should take advantage of the opportunity to show that he had in him the making of a good sailor. It was a chance such as would probably never come to him again, for he knew full well he would be bound by stronger promises than ever before, in case he returned home now, and he was very anxious to be deprived of an opportunity to go ashore.

"Will you answer for this One-one-four?" Captain Ben asked, turning to Bob Ahearn, and Mike's brother replied promptly:

"There's plenty of us here to see that he keeps his word, an' a couple of boys would come in handy when we're dressin' down. I don't know what Tim can do; but I'll go bail he won't have a chance for much sogerin'. Besides, as Ezra says, though I ain't stuck much on his signs, it is bad luck to turn back on the first voyage."

There were others in the crew beside Bob and Ezra who were opposed to putting back after once having left port, and Captain Ben evidently understood as much when he looked sharply around at the men.

"We're workin' on shares, an' I'm the cap'n only in the workin' of the vessel an' pickin' out the fishin' grounds," Captain Ben said after a pause, during which he seemed to be trying to settle the question in his own mind. "If the rest of the crew

are willin', you two boys may stay aboard with the agreement that you 'll lend a hand to anythin' which comes your way, an' if you don't do it I'm allowin' you 'll catch it rough. If there's no word said agin the decision, you can go for'ard an' see what the cook is willin' to do for you in the way of sleepin' quarters, for there's no show aft."

Neither of the men made any protest against the ruling of the captain, and since the cook himself was one of the party who had heard the conversation, it seemed probable he would be willing to do what he might for their well-being.

Seth remained near the mainmast, as if not understanding that the interview had come to an end; but Tim had good reason for believing they would be wise to get below as soon as possible, therefore, taking Master Garland by the hand as if he had been no more than a child, he led him to the galley forward, the cook following close at the heels of the lads.

"So Cap'n Ben thinks it's a good joke to shift you off on to me, eh?" the "captain of the galley" grumbled as he pushed the lads into the cuddy. "I'm to get the offscourin' of this 'ere crew, eh? I wonder how long it's allowed that an A I cook like me will put up with sich treatment? I did n't ship aboard the Hylow to act as nuss for a couple of crazy-headed kids like you two."

Doak, the cook who boasted of having fed Captain Ben on every voyage he ever made, then might he have begun to fear that life would have in it but little of pleasure so long as he and Seth were forced to live forward; but, fortunately for his peace of mind, Mike Ahearn had told him how fond of grumbling was this particular captain of the galley, and explained that he was the "greatest chowder-maker in Cumberland County," therefore One-one-four felt positive it was within his power to make a friend of the hunchback man, whose bark was said to be worse than his bite.

"You won't have to do much nursin' on our account, Mr. Doak," Master Jones said cheerily, "an' I'm allowin' you're gettin' the best end of the trade when we come for'ard to live, 'cause we can help out a good bit on the odd jobs."

"An' are you soft enough to think that the crew of the Hylow will give you a chance to help me?" Abram asked as he wedged himself between the stove and the bulkhead on his own private stool, until the wonder of it was that he had not burned to a cinder before the first meal was prepared. "Boys aboard ship get the rough end of all that's goin', as is right, seein's how they must be hardened to the business if they count on ever amountin' to anythin', an' you'll

find there won't be many spare minutes for either of you. There's Superstitious Ezra; he can shirk more work than a dozen able-bodied men could do, and keep tellin' you all the time of this sign or that which proves that it would be bad luck for him to lift a hand. I often think that the reason why he don't smoke often is because he's too lazy to fill a pipe."

"Where are we goin' to sleep?" Seth asked curiously, as he gazed around the small cuddy, which seemed filled to overflowing with the stove and crooked cook.

"Want to turn in already for fear I'll ask you to peel the potatoes, eh?" Abram asked grumblingly. "It seems to me that the first thing some of these fishermen think about, after they've left port, is a chowder. There's Bob Ahearn, spent his good money buyin' codfish so's I'd have to make a chowder. As if they would n't get fish enough before we see the Cape lights agin!"

"That's 'cause you're the boss chowder-maker, Mr. Doak," Tim said quickly, perhaps hoping to open the way to friendship with a little judicious flattery. "Mike says Bob thinks you must have been born in a chowder kettle, else you could n't fix one up in such style. Show me where the pertatoes are, an' I'll peel enough to set you up in business for a week."

"Lift that hatch," Abram replied with a smile of satisfaction as he pointed to what on shore would have been called a trap-door, cut in the deck just in front of the stove. "Down there is where the stores are kept, an' you may as well get in the habit of waitin' on yourselves, if you count on helpin' me."

Then the cook explained that the lantern which was swinging from a beam just above the folding table must be lighted before they could find their way around the forepeak, and when the two lads were alone in the dark place, gathering up "a peck of potatoes" according to instructions, Master Jones said in a tone of satisfaction to his comrade:

"I believe we'll have the time of our life aboard the Hylow! We'll soon be on the right side of the cook, an' Bob Ahearn is bound to give us a lift, else I'll thump the life out of Mike when we get to Portland agin."

"But what about the cap'n?" Seth asked apprehensively.

"I don't believe he'd hurt a flea. He tries to make out he's a terrible fellow; but I never heard that he's eat anybody. All we've got to do is duff right inter the work, so's they'll know we don't count on sogerin', an' things will go slick as grease. If mother only knew how I was run away with, I'd be havin' the time of my life. Say, did n't it knock you

silly when the cap'n said we had n't been in the hold only since mornin'?"

"Are you kids havin' a camp-meetin' down there?"
Mr. Doak called sharply from the cuddy. "If
you've gone for potatoes, yank'em up here, but if
sich work is too much for your delicate limbs, sing
out, an' I'll come after 'em myself!"

"We're tryin' to make out how much a peck is," Tim replied with a laugh.

"Fill the pan; if I don't use 'em all to-night, I 'll have some on hand for mornin'."

"Are you goin' to put all these in one chowder?"
Master Jones asked as he clambered up from the forepeak, and turned to receive the potatoes which Seth was passing to him.

"That ain't a circumstance to what'll be needed for one chowder when we're on the Banks, an' plenty of cod's heads to go with 'em. I often sit here an' try to figger out how it is some of these fishermen can stow away so much stuff. I've seen in my day Cap'n Ben eat twice his size in one thing an' another, an' never seem to turn a hair doin' it. Now if you can peel potatoes without cuttin' 'em in chunks, I'll look after the pork."

One-one-four soon gave proof that he could pare potatoes in an economical fashion, and Seth was so eager to learn that he cut his finger severely before having well begun the task, causing Abram to exclaim petulantly, as if the injury had been inflicted upon himself:

"There you go! There ain't the least little mite of use expectin' that a lot of boys can behave themselves. Now don't go to lettin' yourself bleed all over everythin'. Get outside, an' see if you can't find somethin' to do that 'll help out on payin' for the grub you 'll eat."

"Seth don't make a reg'lar business of slicin' hisself to pieces when he gets a knife; but he 's all mixed up 'bout bein' sent back to England, so don't rightly know what he 's about," Tim said by way of apology, and Mr. Doak asked curiously:

"Who's goin' to send him to England?"

Then it seemed necessary Tim should tell all the story of Seth's troubles, and so interested did the cook become that a full frying-pan of pork was burned to a cinder before he realized that anything was going wrong.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CAPTAIN OF THE GALLEY.

After having heard why and how the lads had come aboard, Abram Doak's sympathies were thoroughly enlisted, and Tim understood, much to his satisfaction, that they could count on at least one good friend among the crew.

The captain of the galley did not hesitate to express in very forcible terms his opinion regarding the injustice done Seth by the Immigration Commissioners; but he appeared to believe that it was within the power of the captain of the *Hylow* to induce the government officials to take an entirely opposite view of the case.

"You lads wait until we get into port again, an' if Cap'n Ben Willard don't show them high an' mighty politicians what's what, I'm mistaken! I know the skipper of this 'ere schooner 'bout as well as he knows hisself, seein' 's how he an' I have been sailin' together, man an' boy, for pretty much all our lives, an' a master hand is he at straightenin' out snarls. If them bloomin' commissioners don't

think their cake is dough before he gets through with 'em, then I 'm way off soundin's."

Then it was that Tim, realizing that the captain of the galley was inclined to be very friendly, gave words to the sorrow which was his because of having apparently run away.

"It's just like this, lad," Mr. Doak said when the mournful story was concluded, "you can't change things a little bit by feelin' bad, an' there's nothin' for yer to do but hang on an' wait for a turn. Unless your father 's thicker headed than I 'm givin' him credit for, he'll know just how it happened, when your mother tells him what yer said, an' then he'll say to hisself, says he, 'I ain't stuck on havin' my Tim go for a fisherman, but seein' 's how he 's left terry firmness, why he's playin' in great big luck to be with a cap'n like Ben Willard. 'Cause why? 'Cause there ain't a skipper on this 'ere coast, countin' in Gloucester if yer so please, that'll trim my boy up into better shape than Cap'n Ben.' That's what he 'll say to hisself, an' then he 'll set it down to your mother pretty near the same way, though perhaps he'll say to her in a kind'er winnin' way, says he, 'Now don't you go to feelin' bad on 'count of the boy, for he's better off at sea, an' a good deal safer, than he would be down at the bloomin' telegraph office.' So the way I'm figurin' it is, that by this

time, havin' known the *Hylow* has left port, they 're feelin' pretty chipper. Who showed you how to cut potatoes?"

"I've always had to help mother, you know, an' it seems as if the lessons she gave me were comin' in handy."

"Well, it does look a good bit that way, lad, an' I'm countin' that between whiles I'll get quite a lift out of you, though of course it stands to reason you'll have to turn to with the crew when it comes to dressin' down, an' maybe, baitin' trawls, for while the Hylow is a hand-liner you'll find trawls enough aboard to make your heart ache with the settin' of 'em."

"What's a hand-liner?" Seth asked, having by this time checked the flow of blood from his wounded finger and re-entered the galley.

"Well, bless my stars! Where was you brought up, lad?" Mr. Doak cried in amazement, for to his mind the difference between a hand-liner, a trawler, or a seiner should be known by intuition. "Do you mean to tell me you don't know as how a hand-liner is a vessel where a good bit of the fishin' is done from the deck with lines, though, as I said before, we carry plenty of trawls—"

"What's a trawl?" Seth asked in perplexity, and now even Tim laughed because of such ignorance.

Mr. Doak made no attempt to answer the question; but said crustily as he set about making ready some pork to take the place of that which had been burned:

"If I was runnin' an infant class in a Sundayschool I might set myself down to answer sich simple questions; but as it is I reckon you'll find out before we strike Portland harbor agin."

"A trawl is a long line, ever so many hundred feet, with hooks tied on about twenty inches apart," Tim began, and then hesitated, finding it difficult to describe what was so familiar to him. "The hooks are baited, an' the line is buoyed anywhere the fishin' happens to be good. Then the men under-run it with their dories, an' pick off the fish that have been caught."

"Don't understand it yet, eh?" Mr. Doak said interrogatively, seeing that Seth still looked puzzled. "Well, I can't say I blame you after that way of puttin' it, but it won't do for me to start in on your education, else this chowder'll never be done. You'll have to get showed, or find out all about it for yourself, 'cause—"

At this moment the companionway was darkened, as if the hatch had suddenly been closed, and, looking up the lads saw Ezra Snow folding his lank body in order that he might enter the tiny cuddy.

"Now what's happened to you?" Mr. Doak asked sharply. "I told Cap'n Ben, when this 'ere schooner was on the ways, that the big mistake he made was in the size of the galley, for I never saw the time when a lot of fool fishermen would n't want to hang 'round, 'cept, of course, when they got right down to work."

"Now, now, Abram, don't fire into me so heavy. This 'ere is bound to be an unfortunate trip, an' I can't take anythin' harsh from them as should be tryin' to ease things up for me."

"What's gone wrong now, Ezra?" the captain of the galley asked with mild curiosity, as once more he filled the frying-pan with small cubes of salt-pork. "Did a black cat rub up agin yer the wrong way?"

"I wish to goodness one had, an' then perhaps I might stand some little show of makin' fair wages this trip. No, it was n't anythin' half so comfortin' as that. I was goin' down Fore Street when I met that idjut, Jim Sullivan, an' whatever got it into his bloomin' head I can't figger, but he must needs sing out, 'Goin' off on a cruise, eh Ezra? Well here's good luck to you, an' good-bye.' Now you know Abram as well as I, that there's no worse luck can happen a man than for some one to say 'good-bye' when he's startin' out on a fishin' trip, an' if I get back alive it's more'n I'm expectin'."

From the expression on Mr. Snow's face, and the tone in which he spoke, one would have believed he was nearly heartbroken, and a stranger might have sympathized with him, but Abram Doak was too well acquainted with this superstitious fisherman to give very much heed to his sorrows.

"I declare for it, Ezra, I don't know what you'd do if one day should pass when there was n't somethin' turnin' up to give you a chance for croakin'. If I'd see as many signs in a week as you can in an hour, I'm allowin' this 'ere crew'd be mighty hungry before we got well snugged down on the Banks."

"It ain't for you, Abram, to laugh agin signs an' omens, as I could prove if it was n't that I 've got to take my trick at the wheel as soon as I can fire in a mug of your coffee."

"Well, get to work at it as soon as you can, an' then go aft, for I declare you give me the crawls," Mr. Doak said petulantly, as he filled a yellow mug with coffee from an enormous pot which, as the stowaways soon came to learn, was kept on the galley stove night and day for the benefit of the crew.

"I don't reckon you've got a piece of pie, or anythin' like that, to go with this have you, Abram? A two-hours' trick at the wheel right in the shank of the evenin', when the schooner's kickin' to it as she's doin' now, is somethin' a man needs to prepare himself for, an' I'm terribly light-waisted, seein's I did n't get much more'n half my share of grub at dinner."

"You stowed away as much as three men could eat, that I'll swear to," the cook said grumblingly, as he took from its tin plate a full half of a pie composed of pastry and evaporated apples, and turned it deftly from the blade of the knife into the outstretched hand of Mr. Snow.

Seth watched the long sailor as if fascinated by the rapidity with which he devoured the pie, and then tossed off the steaming contents of the mug without taking breath, after which he wiped his mouth with the back of his hand and went aft to do duty as helmsman.

"That's the way you'll see him do, day in and day out," the captain of the galley said as he paused in his work to watch Mr. Snow make his way leisurely toward the wheel. "If he was n't as good a sailor as can be found on the Banks I warrant you there's never a skipper that would have him aboard, for what with his whinin' about this sign an' the other, an' fillin' hisself up till, if he was like any other man he'd bust all to pieces, he ain't what you might rightly call an ornament to any crew."

From that time until the chowder was cooked Mr. Doak criticised the different members of the Hylow's

crew, explaining the peculiarities of this man and the good points of another, until, if the boys could have remembered all he said, it would have been possible for them to recognize each in turn as he came forward.

When the meal was ready the captain of the galley announced the fact by shouting through a trumpet made by his half-closed hands:

"Ahoy, you bully boys, ahoy!"

"Are you goin' to eat in this little place?" Seth asked in surprise, noting for the first time that Mr. Doak had made ready the small table.

"That's what you'll find, lads, an' the sooner you get out of here the better, for when them as has the first whack at the grub get in, it'd be a tight squeeze for a mouse to get out."

It was Captain Ben and five of his crew who answered this first summons, and the two stowaways, thus virtually ejected from the cuddy, lounged aft where they were met by Bob Ahearn, who asked in what he intended should be a facetious tone:

"Gettin' your sea-legs on, eh Tim? Well, you fellows don't want to be too long about it, for them as are aboard the *Hylow* on this trip will keep ahumpin' or there'll be trouble, 'cause Cap'n Ben allows to beat the record. Turn to whenever you see a chance to bear a hand, an' don't try to shirk

work; keep your eyes wide open for anythin' that comes your way, an' if you're half the boys I've taken you to be, you'll both have a fair lay on this trip before we get home."

"Does that mean that we might be paid anythin'?" Tim asked.

"If it so be you can earn it; but bear this in mind, Tim: If once the men get an idee you want to soger on 'em, a fishin' vessel is about the worst place you could be in."

This advice given, Bob Ahearn went forward as if believing it was not seemly for one of the crack hand-liners of the Portland fleet to be spending his time on two lads.

When those who were called to the first table had finished the meal, the helmsman was relieved, and the remainer of the crew trooped forward for their portion of the toothsome chowder; but there was no opportunity for the stowaways to satisfy their hunger until all the others had finished, when, in company with Mr. Doak, they were at liberty to partake of whatever in the way of food had been left by the hungry men.

"It's what you might rightly call the third table," the captain of the galley said as he filled three tin basins, each of which held a full quart and a half, with chowder, and swung the huge coffee pot around so that he might fill the mugs whenever they were empty, without being forced to leave his seat. "As I 've said, it 's what you might rightly call the third table, but you watch out a day or two, an' you'll see that it 's a case of not bein' able to keep count, for when there 's no fishin' goin' on these 'ere men spend pretty much all their time stuffin' theirselves. It 's fair amazin' the amount of grub they'll stow away in twenty-four hours."

Just at that moment Tim was not inclined to speculate upon the appetites of those whom he hoped would one day call him mate, for his mind was in a maze owing to the fact that the movements of the Hylow no longer disturbed him. The saucy little schooner, with a good stiff breeze abeam, was seemingly leaping directly across the chasms of water, now and again heeling until the lee rail would be submerged, and yet it was as if he had no concern with such jumping and plunging save to hold himself steady.

"Yes, I'm allowin' you're seasonin' out right smart," Mr. Doak said in reply to the lad's remark; but then, bless you, there's no tellin' what turn you'll take when we get a bit of wind."

"It seems to me we've got all the wind we need," Seth suggested with just a ghost of a smile, and the captain of the galley laughed loud and long as if the lad had said something witty.

"Do you call this a breeze? Why it ain't enough to lift a hair. I'm allowin' before we make Portland Head agin, you'll see the deck awash clean to the wheel, for, oh my, my, how the wind can blow across the Banks! Wait till it takes two men at the helm, an' them lashed fast to keep from bein' washed over, with the schooner borin' her way down into it till it's a case of usin' the life-lines if you count on pokin' your nose outside."

"Don't, please don't," Seth said faintly. "I'd rather not think of it if we're likely to get much more wind than this," and the lad looked out from the cuddy over the waters which were grown black as ink now that the sun had set, and his breath came in little choking sobs as the waves raced aft towering high above he rail. "In the steamer we were so high up we could look down on the seas, but now it seems as if we were in the very midst of them."

"Ay, lad, an' the safer for it," Mr. Doak said in a tone of satisfaction. "I can't understand how it is that a man'll venture his life in one of them iron tanks they call liners! It's a fair temptin' of Providence; but take it in a craft like this, an' you know what's underneath you. Safer? Why the Hylow'd be makin' good weather of it when one of them bloomin' hulks would be flonderin'. I've knocked about on the Banks year in an' year out,

seein' many a man go under when there was no need of it, an' agin when it could n't be helped; but I was never that venturesome to put my carcass into an iron kettle."

When the meal was come to an end and the two boys had, following Bob Ahearn's advice, assisted the captain of the galley in putting everything to rights, it seemed to Tim as if the Hylow was in imminent danger of being swamped. The night had shut in black as ink; the seething and boiling of the waters as they raced past the hull sounded louder now that it was no longer possible to see them, and the wind roared and shrieked as if bent on carrying the spars out of this schooner which Captain Ben Willard had counted would be the leader of the Portland fleet. Yet as the men came forward to the galley to smoke or get a mug of coffee, there was so little concern shown by them that Tim struggled manfully to repress his fears, for surely there could be no danger while they were so well content.

"She's a little dear, that's what the Hylow is!" Ezra Snow said when he had drank a second mug of coffee within an hour after supper, and was come into the cuddy for a smoke. "She's jest a darlin', an' all Cap'n Ben allowed her to be! If that thick-headed Jim Sullivan had kept his tongue between his teeth, I'd allow we might be takin' fish before this

time to-morrow night. The cap'n's drivin' her to find out how much she'll stand, an' if we're not doin' a good fourteen knots I'll eat my head."

"I reckon that would n't trouble your stomach very much," Mr. Doak said grumblingly. "You've eaten everythin' else to my knowledge, from the time you began to go to sea. Look here, lads," he added, turning to the boys as if just remembering they were aboard, "turn into that bunk for'ard there. I reckon the two of you won't more'n fill one bed, an' if the breeze holds I'm allowin' it's as Ezra says, you'll find out what a hand-liner is before another night comes."

"He still calls this a breeze," Seth whispered as he and Tim stowed themselves away in the narrow bunk. "I hope we'll never see it blow a 'livin' gale,' as sailors call it, for it seems to me as if the schooner was shakin' herself all to pieces now."

Five minutes later the stowaways were no longer troubled by the strength of the wind, for both were sleeping soundly if not noisily, and when they next opened their eyes a new day had come, filling the little cuddy with golden light until all the homely untensils were turned into silver or gold, while the spray which came from the water was transformed into sparkling diamonds.

Mr. Doak was making ready the morning meal,

and Tim cried with a note of concern as he leaped to the deck just in time to be flung against the companionway as the schooner rose on the waves:

"Why did n't you call us to help you? We're countin' on doin' our full share of the work, an' the sooner we are set about it the quicker we'll break in."

"Don't distress yourself about not bein' able to work, lad, for if you don't get all the chance that's needed this'll be a different crew than I ever heard tell of before. Shake yourselves a bit, an' get up some of the stores that we'll be needin' 'twixt now an' noon."

One had no reason to display fear while the sun was shining so brightly; the swirling of the waters and the leaping of the schooner were robbed of their terrors, and the stowaways set about beginning the work of the day with more of cheer in their hearts than they had known since they were imprisoned in the hold. The crew seemed to have nothing of more importance on hand than criticising the sailing of the *Hylow*, or complaining because breakfast was not ready, and all appeared to be in the best of spirits, for although none of them was as superstitious as Ezra Snow, it surely seemed a good omen on the first cruise, this strong, favoring breeze which was bringing out all the sailorly qualities of the *Hylow*.

Not until the hunger of the men had been appeased

and the cuddy set to rights once more, did the lads have leisure in which to think about anything save the duties of the present, and when Abram Doak announced that they could take their "trick below" till it was time for dinner, Tim congratulated himself upon having made a very good beginning toward becoming a fisherman.

"I'm goin' aft an' watch them steer this vessel," he said to Seth. "We have n't stirred out of the galley since comin' aboard, an' it's time we moved 'round so's to show what we can do."

Then he started aft, striving to walk as he believed a sailor should, without yielding to the temptation of steadying himself by the rail or the rigging. This was a dangerous experiment for a landsman, because the deck of the *Hylow* was inclined sharply, and the snow-white planks wet with brine afforded anything but a safe foothold.

"Why don't you give with the swing of the ship?"
Bob Ahearn cried with a laugh as Tim passed him
on his way aft. "Have you forgotten about your
knee joints?"

District Messenger One-one-four was not just certain what his friend's brother meant by this question, but had the idea that he was not imitating a seaman very successfully, and strove to mend his gait, giving just at that moment more heed to swaying his body in a graceful manner than to the movements of the vessel.

The result was only what could have been expected. As the *Hylow* raised her bow ever so little, and then flung her stern into the air as if exulting in the caress of the wind, his foot slipped on the smooth plank; he clutched frantically for the rail, which was six or eight inches beyond his grasp, and then shot down to leeward much like a ball when it leaves the hand of the pitcher.

If he had used every effort to accomplish such purpose he could not have struck more fairly Jerry Bates, the surliest of the crew, who was standing with his back against the mainmast watching the speed of the schooner, and Jerry and Tim went headlong into the scuppers amid a roar of laughter from all who witnessed the accident.

"Tryin' your tricks on me, are you!" Jerry cried wrathfully, scrambling to his feet much like a cat, and seizing Tim by the collar of the coat. "Tryin' to be funny, are you, you bloomin' stowaway? I'll show you a bit of sport that it'll be wise for you to take as a lesson."

Then raising the unfortunate Tim clear of the deck, he swung him out-board from the lee rail into the water, holding him beneath the surface of the rushing waves until the lad believed it was really in the man's mind to drown him.

CHAPTER V.

BAD BLOOD.

Captain Ben was in his cabin when Jerry Bates attempted to punish Tim because of the mishap, else the surly sailor, whom some called a bully and none believed to be an A 1 fisherman, would never have dared to thus ill-treat the lad.

As it was, however, and probably fearing no interference from the crew, the ill-tempered Mr. Bates held the frightened boy beneath the rushing waters until there was really danger he might be drowned before Bob Ahearn came to understand what was being done. It was Ezra Snow, standing his trick at the wheel, who gave the alarm by shouting angrily at Bates:

"Let that boy alone! What d'yer mean by such tricks as that? Do you allow Cap'n Ben'll stand for that brute work?"

Bob Ahearn with a couple of mates was lying in the sun in the lee of the cuddy-house when he heard this cry, and came to his feet leisurely with no idea of trouble, save that perhaps some rough skylarking was being done. Seeing the sailor with his arm outstretched from the rail, he failed to understand what he was about until Ezra Snow called sharply:

"Can't you see what the brute's doin' to that telegraph boy?"

"Do you mean Tim? Where is he?"

"Bates has got him by the collar over the rail."

Bob Ahearn came aft quickly, failing to understand what Ezra meant until it was possible for him to see the white face of Tim rising now and then above the water, while Seth clung to the main halyards, his face bloodless, his eyes seemingly protruding, and unable to speak as he pointed with trembling finger toward the man whom he believed was doing his best to commit murder.

"Bring that boy in-board, an' do it quick!" Bob cried angrily, and Jerry Bates turned half around, making no attempt at obeying, as he asked surlily:

"What business does this happen to be of yours? When I get ready to take orders from a 'longshore swash like you, I'll telephone yer."

"Bring that boy in-board!" Bob cried threateningly, fearing lest the man, in his anger, might attempt to lay hands on him and thus let go of Tim.

"Get hold of the lad before you do much talkin',"
Joe Barker, Bob Ahearn's dory-mate, cried sharply
as he ran aft, and Jerry Bates, his face livid with

passion by this time, swung half around as if intending to prevent Bob from passing him. Thus Tim was in the greater danger, because of the efforts of those who would aid him, and Ezra Snow, who, as a matter of course, could not leave his place at the wheel even for an instant, evidently feared that a tragedy was to be enacted, for he cried loudly:

"Ahoy, Cap'n Ben! Ahoy!"

An instant later, and just at the moment when it seemed as if Bates would have an opportunity of dealing Ahearn a blow, the captain of the *Hylow* appeared from the companionway.

"Jerry is sousin' that telegraph boy over the rail, an' it ain't the thing to do while he's makin' ready for the mix-up that's likely to come!" Ezra cried hurriedly, and Captain Ben took a hand in the matter by running amidships where was the angry group.

Instead of making any attempt at cooling the bad blood between the three men, the master of the *Hylow* slipped a gaff from its beckets, deftly hooked it in Tim's clothing, and thus pulled him so far in-board, despite Bates's hold, that it was possible to bring him over the rail.

"Here Joe, carry this boy for'ard, an' tell Abram to look after him. I reckon he's lost his breath."

Then, wheeling sharply upon Jerry Bates, the captain let loose a torrent of words such as old

"Bankers" were won't to say none but Ben Willard could speak. When he had in a certain degree relieved his anger by speech, he cried warningly:

"You an' I have never sailed together before, Jerry Bates; but I've heard not a little about the monkey-shines you're inclined to play. If it so be you are wantin' to see Portland Head again, remember not to give 'way to 'em while you're aboard the Hylow, for as true as the sun shines I'll serve you out a real taste of what you're pretendin' to give that lad!"

"That is as maybe," Jerry Bates cried, now literally trembling with passion. "I'll take no more from you than I take from any other livin' man, whether he be skipper or cook!"

"You'll take from me what I count on givin', an' many words out of your mouth will be dangerous just now. We Portland fishermen don't go very strong on master an' man business, 'cause we sail together like the partners that we are; but I 'm wantin' you to understand that if need comes it won't take me many seconds to count myself captain of this 'ere schooner!"

Jerry Bates made a movement as if to speak again, but seemingly checked himself when he got a full view of the captain's determined face, and then, shaking himself as does a dog when he throws the water off his hide, lounged forward with a swagger which told of what he believed it would be possible for him to do were he so minded.

Meanwhile Joe had carried Tim into the galley, and Seth so far pulled himself together as to be able to follow, but quaking with fear because of the one glimpse he had got of his friend's pallid face, which seemed proof that the lad was already dead.

Captain Ben looked after the sailor, who had given good indication of being mutinously inclined, for a moment, and then stepped back to the wheel as he asked of Ezra:

"How did the row come on?"

Ezra told him of Tim's mishap, and the punishment which followed, concluding by saying:

"It was me as sung out, Cap'n, an' I did n't dare wait any longer, for it looked mighty like as if the lad was gettin' it altogether too square in the neck."

"There'll be no such work aboard the Hylow, an' that I want understood at the start. A decent man can't rightly blame the boy Seth for doin' his best at givin' the steamship people the slip, an' the other one was n't what might rightly be called a stowaway, though of course I'm not admittin' he had any good excuse for bein' aboard, except that it was a boy's trick. While the two do their duty they shall have fair treatment."

"That's what I'm thinkin' they'll get, an' I would n't have any fear if you was the only one who had a word to say in the business; but this 'ere has started bad blood 'twixt Bob an' Jerry, an' it ain't any two to one that the sour-faced Bates won't take it out of the lads if he gets a chance."

"It'll be safer for him to walk a chalk-line this trip, an' after we've made the home-port I'll not be bothered with him, for if men can't sail together without squabblin' I don't want 'em in a vessel of mine."

Then the captain went below, and Ezra Snow muttered to himself as he brought the *Hylow* a trifle nearer into the wind:

"It's a bad sign! It's a mighty bad sign, an', take it with that good-bye from Jim Sullivan, I ain't sure but the whole crew is hoodooed. It beats all, the luck I have for runnin' up agin signs; I'd been a rich man if they had all come right."

Bob Ahearn had not gone into the galley, because by so doing it would appear as if he was following up Bates, who had continued on forward until he stood well in the bow; but Bob was not needed by Tim, for Joe and Abram were doing all they could toward restoring the lad to consciousness, while Seth, dry-eyed but trembling, watched their every movement, as if suspicious lest they might try to work his friend some harm.

"I reckon you're all right now, lad," the captain of the galley said when Tim opened his eyes and looked about him inquiringly. "You'll be like to get a full dose of salt water many a time while you're aboard a fisherman, but it comes kind'er rough at the start, I reckon. Stay with the Hylow one season, an' there'll be no need of anybody's workin' over you in case you go adrift."

"Did I go adrift?" Tim asked in a tone of alarm.

"Did that man throw me over?"

"He had the heart, but not the courage. A bad egg is Jerry Bates, 'cordin' to all I 've heard, though I never sailed with him before; but if he 'll take a bit of advice from me he 'll keep clear of the skipper, for Cap'n Ben Willard ain't a man as can be trifled with safely."

Joe Barker lighted his pipe as if believing there was nothing else for him to do, and then lounged out of the cuddy, while Abram Doak, suddenly bethinking himself of the dinner which was yet to be cooked, ordered Seth here and there until the lad hardly knew which command should be obeyed first, therefore by thus becoming bewildered in the effort to perform his duties rapidly, recovered from the fright caused by Jerry Bates's brutal behavior.

"You'll stay where you are, lad, till night," the

captain of the galley said sternly when Tim attempted to get out of the bunk.

"But I ain't hurt any, an' the men'll think I'm a reg'lar baby if I stay in bed," Tim replied, the quivering of his voice telling that the will was stronger than the body.

"I ain't allowin' you're hurt, so to speak," Mr. Doak began, waving a mixing-spoon in the air as if to give emphasis to his words. "But there's no man or boy who can be towed around by a schooner when she's movin' along on her side as lovely as this 'ere one is, an' not be a bit shook up when the water's drained out of him. I'm allowin' your partner'll do all that's needed here, an' your're out of the way while in the bunk."

"But there must be somethin' on deck I could do," Tim protested, but with no very great eagerness. "You know Cap'n Ben said we must turn our hands to everythin' that came our way."

"Ay, an' so you must, there's no gainsayin' that; but, except when we've struck fish, it's a case of all hands loafin', savin' them as are on watch, an' there's no call for you to add to the gang of idlers on deck."

"Who are you callin' 'idlers,' Abram?" Bob Ahearn asked with a laugh, as he dropped from the companion into the cuddy. "If you should stir yourself so's to get up five square meals a day, you'd

see whether we could n't move lively enough to keep you goin'."

"Ay, that you would," and Mr. Doak stirred vigorously the batter which he was mixing for fried cakes. "You're all great workers at the table, an' with your tongues; but it remains to be seen what you can do with a line or trawl."

"With the exception of Jerry Bates, I reckon the most of us has shown Cap'n Ben what we could do, an' so long as he's satisfied with the crew I'm allowin' there's no great cause for you to be judgin' of 'em. Well, Tim, my boy, what's your idee of a fisherman's life by this time? You ought to be able to give an opinion, seein's how you've been salted down. I reckon by now you're believin' a telegraph-office job beats fishin' all hollow."

"Indeed I'm not," Tim replied stoutly; "but I have n't had a chance to try my hand at fishin' yet."

"That'll come, boy, that'll come, don't you worry. About this time to-morrow we'll be workin' over as nasty a bit of water as can be found in this 'ere world."

"Are we goin' to try 'Quereau?" Mr. Doak asked.

"Well, a bit worse than that, Abram."

"Meanin' Sable Island Bank, eh?" and now the cook began to look concerned.

"A little worse than that, matey. Try it once again, an' you'll strike it."

"Is Cap'n Ben gone clean wild to tackle the east bar?"

"That's what he is. We'll work 'twixt that an' 'Quereau, so I heard him say this mornin', till we've wet all our salt."

"Or else left the *Hylow* with the other three hundred an' odd craft that have laid their bones upon that 'ere sand bank," Mr. Doak grumbled, and at that moment the companionway was darkened as a mournful voice cried:

"Right you are, Abram! Right you are, an' it's all 'cause that idjut, Jim Sullivan, bid me good-bye, as if the fool did n't have sense enough to keep his tongue between his teeth. We've got as good a craft as ever sailed out of Portland harbor; but her first cruise is goin' to be her last owin' to that bloomin' Jim!"

"Did you ever know of Cap'n Ben's leavin' a craft on Sable Island Bank?" Bob Ahearn asked angrily. "An' have you got fingers enough on both hands to count the seasons, winter an' summer, when he's fished here or 'Quereau? If I ever hear of a fisherman that wants a right good croaker to remind the crew of what's standin' in the way of the fleet, I'll give you a recommend writ down with pen an'

ink, for a first-class, A 1 bloomin', superstitious fool."

"You don't want to rile me, Bob; I only dropped in for a mug-up, but if you don't want to hear what I know, I'll go aft agin. Now then, Abram, let's have it with plenty of sugar."

"If you're goin' to tell all you know, Ezra, there'll be time to do it while I'm pourin' out this 'ere coffee," Mr. Doak said as he began to fill a capacious yellow mug. "As a general rule I'm always standin' ready to look cheerful when a crew of idle fishermen have got nothin' else to do but mugup, but in your case it seems like a clean waste of good material. You've always got an empty hold, an' never seem to have a cargo, no matter how much you put in. It's clean discouragin', cookin' for the likes of you."

"I agree with some part of that 'ere statement, Abram," Mr. Snow said as he took the coffee from the cook's hand, stirring it vigorously to make certain all the sugar was dissolved. "If you was what could be called an able seaman's cook I might get nourishment enough to sustain me from one hour to another; but a man 's got to put away a heap of your truck in order to gather what you'd call a square meal. Now then, One-one-four, what do you think of your shipmate, Mr. Bates? Seems to me you an'

he had a chance to get fairly well acquainted, eh?"

"Let the boy alone," Bob Ahearn said as he treated himself to a mug of coffee. "I'm allowin' it's best to leave him to himself for a spell."

Then, as the readiest way of making certain his command was obeyed, Bob Ahearn shouldered the superstitious Ezra out of the companionway, and when the cook with his assistants were left alone in the galley, Seth asked anxiously:

"What kind of fish do they catch off Sable Island, Mr. Doak?"

"Well, you might say it's the best ground for halibut, cod, an' haddock, an' a wicked ground it is, too. There ain't much of anythin' done there but trawlin' an' hand-linin'. It's snug in on the bar that most of the fish are found; but, dear me, let the wind come up to the east'ard with you lyin' well in to either bar, an' it's a case of stoppin' right there, as many a good fisherman an' able seaman have done. If there's anybody knows Sable Island fishin' it's Cap'n Ben, an' I've seen him haul the old Spitfire off the shoals when there was n't one skipper in a thousand as could have done it. We've taken nigh to eight thousand halibut an' six or seven thousand of cod in one day there before the wind came 'round easterly with a drivin' snow, an' you can just set it down as a fact that Abram Doak made up his mind he'd stop right on Sable Island bar till Gabriel sounded his last trump. But we crawled off as no other men could have done, pullin' the Spitfire's timbers apart that wicked she was more like a rail fence than a respectable schooner."

"Could you catch eight thousand halibut in one day?" Seth asked in surprise.

"Pounds, lad, pounds! You'll be no kind of a sailor if you reckon your fish by the tails. We was out a little short of sixteen days that cruise, an' each man's lay figured up two hundred an' sixty-one dollars. That's the kind of a fisherman Cap'n Ben is! Do you think I'd knock 'round the galley of some of them droghers that sail out of Portland, gone anywhere from four to six weeks an' gettin' back with half a fare? A man at my time of life ain't riskin' his precious carcass for forty or fifty dollars a month!"

"Are you on a lay, too, Mr. Doak?" Tim asked.

"That's what I am, though it stands to reason I sha'n't do much fishin'; but let all the dories be out trawlin', an' who's goin' to catch it? Why it's ten to one I'll be left alone aboard."

"Will all them dories go out at the same time?"
Seth asked as he pointed to the "nest" of boats
which was lashed securely amidships.

"From the time we begin, unless the weather gets

bad, you'll find 'em all in the water night an' day, lad. It's while we're runnin' that the men loaf 'round, swappin' yarns an' muggin'-up every five minutes; but wait till we get to takin' fish, an' then you'll see what work is aboard a Banker. They may talk about their Gloucestermen, an' it's mostly them as do the talkin'; but when it comes to bringin' in fish good an' plenty, right on the top of the market, give me Cap'n Ben rather than any bloomin' duck from Gloucester."

Mr. Doak had no further opportunity to air his views regarding the merits of Portland fishermen as compared with Gloucestermen, because the crew gathered in the galley ostensibly for a mug of coffee, but really to smoke and spin yarns while they watched Abram prepare for the noon-day meal an amount of food which apparently would have sufficed fifty men ashore.

"Gettin' right back on that business of fishermen, eh, Abram?" Bob Ahearn cried with a laugh as he dropped into the cuddy just in time to hear the last of Mr. Doak's remarks. "Them lads from Gloucester seem to give you a pain, don't they? For ten years back I've never heard you have much to say 'cept that. Now I'll tell you what it is, we've got Bankers sailin' out of Portland that are just as smart vessels, an' we've got as good fishermen as they have

up Gloucester way; but neither fleet can bring in any fish 'cept when they find 'em, though I 'm allowin' some skippers can show better judgment than others. Now I 've seen a seiner that 'd work all 'round some of them 'ere fishermen from Gloucester. There was the Mary Willard, filled right up in the middle of the Gloucester fleet, an' the cap'n jumped her into port with fresh fish twelve hours before any other craft showed up, yet there was n't any one went very wild about it. We did n't get out a brass band, or have the streets illuminated on account of what had been done. There 's a good deal in blowin' your own horn, but I never heard it brought in many dollars."

Bob's reference to the Mary Willard provoked a perfect flood of reminiscences from his mates, and inasmuch as every man smoked vigorously, and now and then Abram, in his eagerness to hear all that was said, allowed some of the fried cakes to burn, it can well be fancied how thick was the air of the cuddy. Seth was actually forced to go on deck, and it would have pleased Tim if he could have followed; but in view of Mr. Doak's command the lad thought it safest to remain where he was, preferring to be offered up as a martyr to the fumes of tobacco, rather than take the chances of incurring the cook's wrath.

During the remainder of that day and well into the night, the Hylow drove on toward the treacherous sands of Sable Island Bank with the wind abaft her beam, her deck fairly awash from stem to stern, and all hands, save Jerry Bates, and, possibly, the two lads, in the best of spirits.

Only twice, and then when he came into the cuddy for his meals, had Tim seen the surly fisherman who, perhaps, would have drowned him before getting the better of his temper, and at each of these times the lad had quite as much as he could do to prevent the fear in his heart from showing on his face, for it really seemed as if Jerry Bates looked upon him as an enemy.

When Seth crawled in that night by the side of Tim in the narrow bunk, the *Hylow* was storming along as if bent on an ocean voyage, with no time to lose, and when he awakened it was in fear and trembling, for a thunderous noise had brought him bolt upright in the bunk, striking his head against the deck timbers with a thump that caused him to see stars. Then the *Hylow* tossed and plunged wildly, apparently making little or no headway.

"What is it? What is it?" Tim cried, scrambling to the floor of the galley, and then pitching forward toward the companionway with no gentle force, missing the step by less than an inch as he slid down the deck.

"What is it?" Mr. Doak repeated in a grumbling

tone as he swung himself gingerly out of the berth. "It's Sable Island Bank, that's what it is, an' if you youngsters don't get a move on you won't be takin' the first fish."

"Why it's night!" Seth cried in surprise.

"How are you goin' to fish in the night? How can anything be done while the ship's knockin' us about so bad?"

"Bear in mind, lads, that a fisherman hangs with his eyelids, on a hand-liner. This ain't no more 'n what you might call a pleasant, social seaway. Can't see to fish, eh? Well, I'm allowin' you'll get your eyes open before a great while. There she goes! I'll bet a doughnut against a dollar it was Bob Ahearn that struck it!" Mr. Doak cried with a ring of triumph in his tone as the lads could plainly hear what sounded like a drumming on the deck. "Cap'n Ben has anchored, as he always does, right in the thick of 'em. From now on you'll have a taste of what Bankers do when the fish are strikin' in good an' strong. Move 'round lively; we must get breakfast goin' so 's to be ready for 'em, an' when things are well started you may go on deck an' see what kind of a fist you'll make at hand-linin'."

CHAPTER VI.

HAND-LINING.

After the drumming of the first fish told that the Hylow's crew had begun work, Tim and Seth, having done full duty in the galley, went on deck. It was yet dark; the schooner lay at anchor under the mainsail, and, standing at either rail were the men busily engaged in taking aboard huge cod or haddock swinging in the line on which was a three-pound sinker and perhaps a twelve-pound fish, as handily as an inexperienced man might have swung a mackereljig.

Each man was flinging his fish as fast as taken from the hook, behind or beside him as was most convenient, and during the short time of work the *Hylow's* deck was well covered, not a few of the men standing nearly knee-deep amid the catch.

Bob Ahearn's station was at the starboard rail near the galley, and he was hauling his line and throwing it out as if his very life depended upon taking a certain number in the shortest possible space of time, while next him stood that surly seaman whom Tim had good reason to dislike, Jerry Bates.

"I thought you always fished from the dories, Bob," Tim said, looking about in vain for a line that he might try his luck.

"Well, that's what we mostly do, lad, 'cept when we've clean decks, as is the case now. After we get to dressin' down you'll find that 'ere nest of dories broken out, an' about that time you an' your partner will be havin' your hands full. If you've a mind to try your luck at this kind of work, tell Abram to get out some lines for you."

The cook, who had made ready the breakfast and was waiting only for the fishermen to eat it, quickly did as Tim desired, and in a few moments the two stowaways were hauling in what seemed to be huge fish, the weight of which told heavily upon their arms. So excited did they become that it seemed nothing less than sport, and they gave no attention to weariness when Bob Ahearn sternly ordered them to "get some grub."

Then it was they realized how their arms and backs ached; how sore were their hands, and how fishy was the odor everywhere around.

The crew of the Hylow went to breakfast whenever fancy dictated, and very little time was spent at table, for while the fish were taking hold so sharply it was necessary they reap as large a harvest as possible.

Not until nearly night-fall did the "school" strike off, and then came the word to reel in and set about dressing down.

The tables, on which those who cleaned the fish worked, were set up, and the gurry-kids in which the cods' livers were to be thrown were placed conveniently at hand. On the combing of the hatch were stuck the cleaning knives, sharp as razors, and after each of the tired men had had what he called a "bite," but which was really a hearty meal, the work of dressing down began.

Then it was that Tim and Seth got an idea of what their work aboard the Hylow might be when fishing was good, for from an hour before sunset until another day was beginning to dawn they stood by this table or that, passing up from the deck fish to the men who were dressing down, and having never a moment of rest save when he upon whom they waited stopped to change knives, or refresh himself with a tin cup of water from the scuttle-butt. It was backaching work, even for those accustomed to it, but to the two stowaways who had never taken part in anything of the kind, it was really killing.

When the last fish had been cleaned and packed in salt, the lads believed their time for rest had come,

a hand with the cleaning up, and for an hour or more they were swabbing down the decks, emptying the gurry-kids into the butts, and otherwise playing the part of assistants to the busy men.

"Now I reckon you youngsters may turn in for a spell; but I've got to bear a hand at baitin' the trawls," Bob Ahearn said with mock mournfulness, and Seth, whose eyes were almost closed despite his efforts to keep them opened, asked curiously:

"Is it much work to bait trawls?"

"Well, when you take a skate—that means a line with three or four hundred hooks on it—bait it in good shape, an' coil it down properly, you'll think you've done about a full day's work, when, as a matter of fact, you have only begun; but you'll see enough of trawlin' before we make Portland Head, an' I'm allowin' sleep is what you need just now."

It was what the boys needed; they staggered below, not because of the movements of the vessel, but owing to exhaustion, and literally tumbled into the bunk, their eyes closing in slumber instantly they were stretched out at full length.

Not until the trawls were baited and set did the remainder of the crew gain any rest from the arduous labors. Then it was not more than a two-hour trick below before word was passed for the dory-men.

The men came into the cuddy for dinner two or three hours after the time it would have been served if the schooner had been under way, yet the weary stowaways were not awakened until Jerry Bates, who was one of the "second half" in the order of meals, came below, flinging his sou'wester, the brim of which had been turned up and was half full of water, directly upon Tim's face.

"What are them kids sogerin' for? I thought Cap'n Ben did n't keep cats aboard what could n't catch mice," he cried angrily, as if he was in some way disturbed by the slumber of the lads.

"That's a mighty mean trick of yours," Abram exclaimed, half drawing back the mug of coffee which he was in the act of handing the surly fisherman. "You've took a spite agin that lad just 'cause of what was only an accident that might have happened to the best man aboard, an' I call it brute's play."

Tim was out of the bunk as quickly as any lad would come who had been treated to a salt bath, and stood there blinkering in bewilderment, not understanding the cause of the rude awakening, when Bates roared:

"Give me that coffee, Abram, if you ain't huntin' for trouble, an' make less talk about what I'm doin' with a couple of worthless scrubs we've got aboard. It's enough to make an honest man grit his teeth."

"Which is somethin' you won't do, if it's a question of honesty," Mr. Doak replied, and it is more than probable he would have read Jerry Bates a lesson without being careful to pick his words, but for the fact that just then Captain Ben summoned him on deck. There were then in the cuddy only the two stowaways, Ezra Snow, and the gentle Mr. Bates who was seemingly disturbed because Seth yet remained in the bunk.

"Get a move on there," he cried, "or I'll give you a lift! All hands workin' like niggers, an' you two down here takin' your ease!"

"Now see here, Bates, you let the youngsters alone," Ezra Snow said in a placid tone, without raising his eyes from the savory dish of fried cods' tongues and sounds with scraps of pork and potato hash.

"You 'tend to your eatin', an' I'll mind my business," Mr. Bates replied curtly, deceived by the mild manner of the superstitious sailor. Then to Tim he cried: "You two get on deck, or I'll give you this!"

As he spoke he took up one of the heavy boots which had been left near the stove to dry, and before either of the boys had time to obey the harsh order, however quickly they might have jumped, he flung it full at the head of One-one-four. Fortunately for himself, Tim ducked in time to escape the missile, but

Seth received it full in the chest, and was knocked violently against the side of the bunk, whereupon Mr. Snow quietly reached across the table, grasping Jerry Bates by the wrist as if minded to do him some friendly service.

"You'll take my advice an' leave them lads alone. That's what I said before, but likely you didn't hear it."

"Let go there or I'll ---"

Mr. Bates raised the mug of coffee in his left hand as if to hurl it at Ezra, at the same time struggling to break the latter's grasp, but it was as if an iron band encircled his wrist.

"Don't throw the mug, 'cause it's a bad sign at this time in the day," Mr. Snow said pleasantly, "an' as for gettin' away from me when once I've got a grip, there is them on this 'ere schooner as'll tell you it can't be did."

"I'll break your head!" Mr. Bates screamed, his face grown livid with anger as he realized how impotent he was in Ezra's grasp.

"I'm allowin' you won't do anythin' of the kind, else I'll take hold of your throat with my other hand," and Mr. Snow literally dragged the fisherman toward him until he was lying half across the table. Not until then did he raise his voice. "Blast your ugly picture, I won't have any Fore Street capers

for'ard here, an' I heard Cap'n Ben say pretty near the same thing concernin' the after part of this 'ere craft. I don't know what the cap'n counts on doin' if you don't behave man fashion, but I 've got a clear idee of what I'll do if so be you rub agin my grain."

Then Ezra released his hold, and Mr. Bates slipped back upon the locker without having attempted to carry out his threat; but showed by quivering lip and glaring eyes what he would do save for the wondrous strength displayed by the superstitious fisherman.

"You youngsters can go on deck, or stay here, just as it pleases yer; there's nothin' pertic'lar to be done as I knows of, till the dories come home, when you'll get the same dose you had last night," Mr. Snow said in a friendly tone. "Don't let the idee slip into your heads that that son of a sea-cook'll attempt any mischief, 'cause if he does it'll be up to him to settle with me in case Cap'n Ben don't take it up."

Tim had no doubt, after what he had seen, that Mr. Snow would be able to carry out the threat; but he was not at all certain Jerry Bates could be held in restraint, and without loss of time he and Seth scuttled on deck, finding it almost deserted by the men, while of the nest of dories which had been lashed amidships, only one remained aboard.

"Just turned out, have you?" Captain Ben asked as he saw the two lads, and Tim replied, speaking very respectfully:

"We'd have come sooner if anybody had wakened us, sir."

"If Abram did n't call you I reckon that was a sign, 'cordin' to the way Ezra 'd put it, that you was n't greatly needed, but seein's you're here it may be as well to get out the grind-stone an' sharpen the knives, for we'll use 'em to-night 'cordin' to the looks of this," and the captain gazed around upon the tiny specks which represented the dories belonging to the Hylow, all of which were between the schooner and that narrow strip of sand known as Sable Island. "Abram'll show you about the job, an' get you well to work. After his it's your business to 'tend to cleanin' up, sharpenin' knives, swabbin' out the dories, an', of course, bearin' a hand when we're dressin' down."

Then the captain shouted impatiently to those in the galley:

"Bear a hand, Ezra! You don't need more'n three hours to mug-up. If your stomach needs more fillin' than it's got already, take the rest of the stuff in your hand."

This last command the superstitious sailor obeyed literally, and when he came up the companionway

with half of a fried pie and two fried cakes, his mouth was already so full it really seemed to Tim that the man must be choked if the schooner gave a sudden lurch.

Ezra seemed to know why he had been summoned, for placing his mug of coffee in the bow of the dory yet remaining on deck, he laid hold with a will, and, with the aid of the captain, hoisted her out-board.

"Where 're they goin'?" Tim asked of Mr. Doak as the skipper and Mr. Snow pulled in the direction of the island, their dory literally standing on end more than half the time, so heavy was the sea.

"I'm allowin' the old man ain't jist satisfied with this ground; wants to get nearer that bloomin' bar I s'pose. He'll take a cruise 'round an' make sure the boys are runnin' the trawls all right. I'm allowin' it would be a good idee for you to hustle a bit with whatever he sets you to do, for he's powerful strong at wantin' a man to hop when he hollers."

Then Mr. Doak gave the stowaways their first lesson in grinding knives, and, that done, rolled himself into the galley, from whence came immediately after the sound of voices in angry dispute, telling that the cook and Mr. Bates were not getting on in a very friendly way just then.

"There don't any of 'em seem to like that Jerry Bates," Tim said half to himself as he held the knife-

blade carefully against the face of the grind-stone, and Seth replied grimly:

"I don't see how they could; he's a reg'lar bear, that's what he is."

"He's a good deal worse than that, Seth, an' I'm afraid he'll make it warm for us before this cruise is ended."

"It's too bad, ain't it? All the rest of 'em seem so kind'er chummy like, an' try to help a fellow along. We've got to keep our eyes peeled mighty sharp, if we're countin' on earnin' our way, for if we can't do it that man Bates won't be the only one down on us."

Mr. Bates came on deck while the lads were working, but he gave no attention to them, and set about putting up what looked like pens on the deck of the schooner, which were intended, as the lads afterward came to know, as receptacles for the fish which were soon to be brought in by those who were running the trawls. He was still occupied with such labor when the first of the dories returned, loaded gunwale deep with silver cod and striped haddock, and the surly seaman ceased his labors sufficiently long to hook tackle on the craft, that she might be hoisted in-board after the cargo had been thrown into one of the bins.

It was Reuben Hardy and his dory-mate who had

come in with the first load, and the former said cheerily as he unloaded his craft, speaking to no one in particular:

"It beats all how Cap'n Ben can strike a fishin' ground. I believe he could sail the Hylow with his eyes shut till comin' to anchor, an' then tell without the lead how many fathoms there were, an' what kind of fish we'd get. Runnin' big, an' plenty of 'em. If the other skates turn out anythin' like ours, we'll have ten thousand 'twixt now an' night."

Abram Doak came out of the galley as if believing Hardy was speaking to him, and, inspecting the take as it was coming aboard like a stream of silver, said approvingly:

"Big an' fat. Have n't been worried much lately. I 'm allowin' we stand a chance of breakin' the record this 'ere cruise, for it ain't once in a hundred times that you can come to Sable Island Bank without findin' a dozen or more craft ahead of yer. Here we are with not a soul in sight! I'd kind'er like to stretch my arms a bit, Reuben, an' when you get them fish out of her I believe I'll pull 'round among the trawls just to show the lads how the thing's done."

"Do you mean that you are to take us?" Tim asked, finishing the last knife and sticking it in the hatch-combing ready for use.

"That's what I'm allowin', if so be you're achin' to take a cruise."

"The sea's mighty heavy for us to go out in a dory, ain't it?"

"Heavy, lad? Why bless you this's just like a mill-pond compared to what you'll find it here more'n half the time; but with that 'ere fog creepin' in I'm allowin' we'll get quite a spell of weather, though the chances are it'll come easterly when we do catch it."

"I thought we was gettin' considerable now." Tain't what you could call a calm," Tim said with a laugh, and then as the dory was unloaded he watched his chance to leap in when she rose on a wave, thereby winning applause from Reuben Hardy, who said approvingly:

"I would n't wonder if there was the makin's of a fisherman in you, Tim. For a green hand you're showin' considerable judgment already; I reckon Abram'll have to pass your mate in."

Seth was standing on the rail by the rigging, as if undecided whether he should make the leap or no, for the dory was jumping around so lively that the slightest miscalculation would send him into the water; but rather than be lifted aboard like a lubber he took the chances, and was fortunate enough to land on his feet in somewhere near the proper position.

Mr. Doak followed, and when the little boat was unhooked he bent to the oars as a sailor should, handling her with as much ease as another might the daintiest pleasure craft on a mill-pond.

It was great sport, after the lads became accustomed to the sudden, seemingly erratic movements of the dory, to climb those swirling hills of water, and dive into the green valleys beneath, only to feel her rise again buoyantly as a cork when the yeasty waves seemingly threatened to engulf her.

"Where 're we goin', Mr. Doak?"

"Over yonder where the boys are runnin' the trawls." Then the cook made his meaning plain by first explaining that a "skate" as used in connection with trawls means one length of line with the hooks attached, which, when not in use are kept in tubs; that the tub was neither more nor less than a half-barrel in which the skate or trawl was coiled ready to be payed out without a hitch; that each end of the trawl was buoyed, as a matter of course, and the hooks attached hung down in the sea. Now to "run" a trawl meant for two men in a dory to lift the line across their boat, pulling the craft along as they unhooked the fish and rebaited the hooks, or in other words, they cleaned off the trap and set it over again, often getting, as Mr. Doak stated, a full load from one skate, or, in another case, no more than half as many fish as the dory could carry when they had run all the trawls.

"We'll have just about time to get over to yonder crew before that blessed smother shuts in," Abram said as he pointed to the dory nearest in-shore, and Tim looked around to see some evidence of the fog regarding which the cook had spoken.

Save that the horizon to the eastward was not as sharply defined as it was to the westward, he could see nothing on the surface of the sea to betoken any change; but before half an hour had passed it was as if a thick curtain of wool had been let down from the sky, and was being pulled along, shutting out from view everything behind it.

Nearer and nearer it came as if bent on making port at Sable Island, until in a twinkling, as it were, the *Hylow* was hidden from view, the wind dying away as the fog advanced. While the lads were yet straining their eyes to catch some glimpse of the schooner's spars amid the vapor, they themselves were enveloped in the heavy cloud, and Mr. Doak cried in the tone of one who feels that he has been unfairly dealt with:

"It ain't often I take a little jaunt like this when we're on the fishin' grounds, an' it seems as if I no more'n get the idee into my head then up comes a fog to shut the whole thing out. I wonder Ezra

don't find some sign in it! Perhaps if I had n't said good mornin' or good evenin' to anybody for a week before we left port, this would n't have happened."

"How'll we find our way back?" Seth asked anxiously, and Mr. Doak replied carelessly:

"Never you mind about that, lad. The bother of it is that we sha'n't strike them as we was headin' for without considerable trouble. While the dories are out whoever's aboard the schooner will keep the bell goin' till all hands are in agin."

"But why don't you turn back, if you can't find those you want to?"

"Well, I was allowin' we'd pull about a bit so's to see how near blind luck would bring us," and Mr. Doak buckled down to the oars as if in great haste to get nowhere in particular.

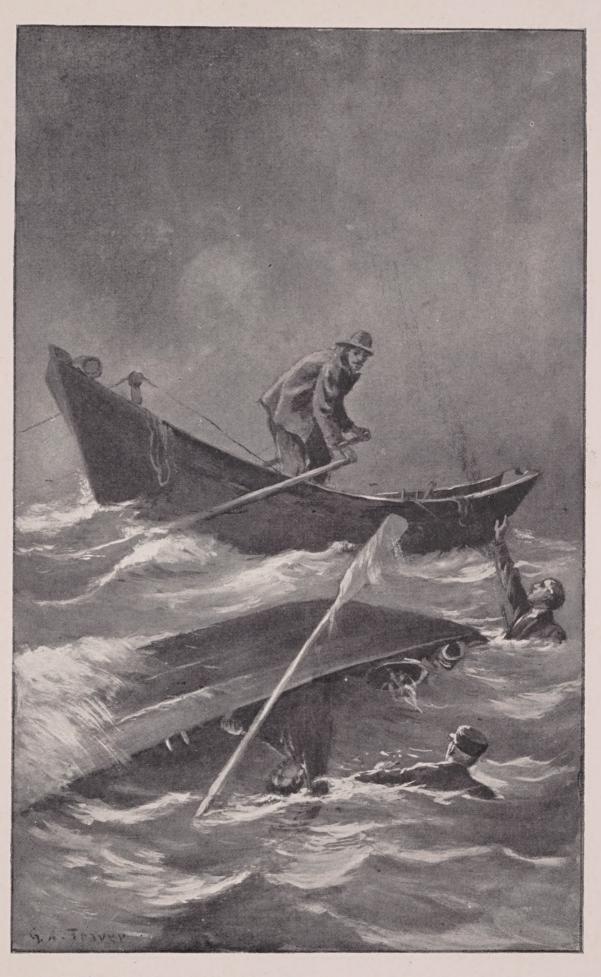
Neither Tim nor Seth felt thoroughly comfortable to be thus sailing away from the Hylow when the fog was so dense that one could not see a boat's length ahead of him; but Abram appeared to be enjoying himself so much that they could not well insist upon his turning back when the excursion had seemingly been planned for their special pleasure. Therefore on the little craft was urged; up and down she rose and fell on the long green surges, Mr. Doak pulling at the oars mechanically, as if he had been changed

from a human being into a machine, until suddenly Tim cried:

"I can see something black ahead!"

The warning came too late. The dory struck fairly amidships the craft for which Mr. Doak had been heading, rose up over her side as she yielded to the blow, and then, as Tim afterward said, "twisted like a snake," throwing the cook and his two assistants into the water.

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THE DORY STRUCK AMIDSHIPS, THROWING THE COOK AND HIS TWO ASSISTANTS INTO THE WATER



CHAPTER VII.

A LONG PULL.

Tim Jones had fallen out of a boat twice before in the course of his venturesome life, and counted the mishap as something in the way of sport; but then it had been a case of going overboard on a calm day when the waters of the harbor were like glass, and was a very different proposition from being pitched out of a dory off Sable Island with the waves running high as they always do in shoal water.

Seth and his mate were literally flung from the craft, owing to the collision and the sudden heel; but it surely seemed as if Mr. Doak must have lost his presence of mind for the time being, and instead of leaping out-board, went over with her, therefore, as a natural consequence, was held beneath the surface when Tim and Seth came up puffing and blowing like a couple of porpoises.

"Can you swim, Tim?" Bob Ahearn shouted, leaping to his feet just in time to save himself from being hurled over the gunwale.

"I can keep paddlin' 'round if you'll look after Mr. Doak an' Seth," the lad replied cheerily, as he

struck out bravely when a big wave lifted him on high as if bent on sweeping him ashore to that lonely, dangerous reef whereon so many brave men had lost their lives.

Bob's dory had withstood the shock of the collision because of the trawl line which served in a measure to hold her steady; but his mate, Joe Barker, had gone over the gunwale like a lump of lead, with a fair chance of being caught by one of his own hooks before coming to the surface.

It was necessary Bob should throw off the trawl line before he could pull the dory around in the work of rescue, and, this done, he must pick up the oars and throw them between the thole-pins. He moved quickly, as only a thorough sailor can when a craft is being tossed like a cork on the wild waves; but a certain number of seconds were spent in such movements, and all the while Abram was hidden from view by the overturned boat.

Seth had come to the surface within a few feet of where he went down, and Bob shouted as he swung the dory's stern around with a mighty sweep of the starboard oar:

"Get hold, lad, an' be handy with it! Then pull yourself in-board, if so be you can, for I've got to look after the only cook we're likely to find on the Banks!"

It was as if Ahearn did not wait to see whether Seth had obeyed the command, before he leaped over the gunwale, never stopping to throw off his oilskins or boots, and to Tim, who was floundering about first on the crest of a wave and then hidden by green walls on every hand as he descended into the watery chasms, it seemed as if Bob had plunged straight to the bottom.

Fortunately for himself, Seth had been in position to obey the hurriedly spoken command, and as he raised himself up until his chin was on a level with the stern-board of the dory, it seemed as if he was the only survivor of the four.

"Tim! Tim! Where are you?" he shouted wildly, and District Messenger One-one-four cried as a big wave carried him directly over the floats of the trawl:

"Never mind where I am; but lend Mr. Doak a hand! Pull the dory around so's Bob can get a grip on her when he comes up!"

For one unaccustomed to small boats it was difficult to obey this command; but Seth did his feeble best, although it is doubtful if he could have swung the heavy craft around before all hands were drowned, had not Joe Barker suddenly made his appearance alongside, coming up out of the sea like a very clumsy mermaid. The dory was pulled down on her side as he clutched the gunwale, working his way aft hand over hand until he could get hold of the stern, for it would be impossible to clamber over the side without overturning the craft, and Seth leaped to the weather rail, believing he was about to be flung into the water again.

"Keep your wits with you, lad. Don't give any heed to me; but pull her head around so's Bob'll find her handy when he gets through foolin' with Abram!"

Seth did his best to follow the instructions; but he was so excited—perhaps frightened would be the better word—that he was unable to accomplish very much. It seemed to him certain all those in the water would be drowned, and equally as positive that the dory would be swamped despite his efforts.

To the three fishermen, however, this was hardly more than an incident in their lives, and they set about the task of rescuing each other much as if it was nothing out of the ordinary.

By the time Joe Barker had clambered in over the stern of the dory and taken the oars to pull back to the overturned boat, Bob Ahearn was waiting to be taken aboard, having dragged Abram out from beneath the capsized craft, not without some difficulty, however, for the cook's leg had become entangled in a cod-line.

"How're you gettin' on, lad?" Joe called to Tim, who, as it seemed to Seth, was being carried rapidly toward the distant line of black which marked the location of Sable Island, and One-one-four replied, striving to the best of his ability to prevent a tremor of fear from being perceptible in his voice:

"I'm all right! Have you got Mr. Doak?"

"Ay, he's comin' aboard now, an' we'll pick you up as soon as we've emptied a little of the water out of him."

Although it takes some time to tell of what was done, it was hardly a moment from the time that Abram was flung into the water until he and Bob were clutching the stern of the dory, and neither one or the other appeared to be the worse for the involuntary bath.

Joe satisfied himself with one quick glance that the two men had a firm hold of the boat, and then it was as if he had no further care concerning them, but bent his back to the oars, heading the dory straight for the tiny speck which could faintly be seen amid the fog, knowing it to be the head of One-one-four.

Tim was taken on board as if he had been a small halibut. Joe Barker gaffed him as the dory swept past, bringing him in-board floundering and blowing, at about the same time the cook and Bob Ahearn came over the stern.

"Is everything all right?" One-one-four asked when he had recovered his breath, and Bob replied as he turned to search with his eyes for the capsized dory, which was shut out from view by the fog:

"It will be, Timmy, as soon as we can pick up your boat, which may not be sich an easy job in this 'ere smother. What possessed you to come out with a cook on your first excursion? Don't you know that about the most useless bit of timber aboard a fisherman is a bloomin' cap'n of the galley?"

Bob did not appear to think it was necessary he should give any heed to the rescued ones; this going overboard in pleasant weather was something of such little consequence that there was no good reason for speaking of it a second time.

"I did n't think a dory would tip over so easy," One-one-four said as he shook himself to throw off some of the water which weighted down his garments, while Mr. Doak was wringing out his jacket.

"Easy?" Joe cried as he fumbled under his oilskins to learn whether his tobacco had been soaked to a pulp. "What do you call easy? When a shore-goin' lubber pulls her up onto another craft, what do you think is likely to happen? I never yet saw a cook that could be trusted outside the galley!" "You never did, eh?" and now Abram gave heed to what was being said concerning him. "You never saw the time when he was the only man in all the crew left aboard to pick you dory-men up when you'd gone an' lost yourselves in a smother like this? I'd like to know what you empty-waisted, imitation fisherman would do without a cook!"

"We might come a leetle light on grub now an' then; but we'd be able to haul a trawl without havin' a lot of lubbers nosin' round in a boat that they did n't know how to handle."

"Come to port a couple of points, Joe," Bob, who was on his feet straining his eyes in search of the missing dory, cried, and as Barker obeyed, Mr. Doak said, directing his conversation to Seth who was in the stern-sheets with him:

"The longer you stay aboard of a fisherman, lad, the nearer you'll come to findin' out that them as thinks the most of themselves is of the least account as sailors. When two of 'em is runnin' a trawl they seem to think they 're the only things on earth, an' everybody else must give 'em a wide berth. I 've had more experience than I need with sich 'longshore swash as we've got aboard the Hylow."

"All that may be true, Abram; but you're needin' a heap more experience in handlin' a dory than you've had yet. When we make Portland agin you'd better have a little one built, so's you can sail her in a tub till you've got some of the hayseed out of your hair. More to port, Joe; if we get too far away from where that blessed cook beached his boat we'll have a sight of trouble to find her in this smother. My, my; but it is comin' in thick, an' no mistake! All we're needin' now to make Ezra certain Jim Sullivan hoodooed him by sayin' good-bye, is for the wind to haul 'round to the east'ard while we're so far in on the shoal."

"I should think that with two such bloomin' good sailors aboard, it would n't take more 'n an hour to pick up one little dory," Mr. Doak said in a sarcastic tone, as Joe Barker pulled the boat around in a circle, Bob standing in the bow trying to make out a small lump of blackness squatting low in the water, which would betoken the whereabouts of the missing craft.

"There's a good deal of thinkin' done by them as don't know how to do anythin' else," Bob replied with a laugh. "Seein' would be more to the pint jest now, an' we'll need a heap of it if we're to pick up the bottom of a dory in a fog like this. Move a bit lively, Joe, for it would n't s'prise me if we began to feel more easterly wind than 'll be comfortable within the next hour."

Then a long time of silence ensued, when the whine

of the oars in the thole-pins, and the slap-slap-slapping of the waves against the dory's bow was all that could be heard. Joe pulled the little craft in a circle, while Bob kept a sharp watch, but nothing could be seen save the surging green waves and that thick smother of grayish vapor.

"Better give her up an' finish runnin' the trawl," Mr. Doak suggested at length, and Seth looked at Tim in surprise that the cook should even propose running the trawl when it seemed to him as if their lives depended upon finding the *Hylow* within the shortest possible space of time.

"We'll run no more trawls this day," Bob replied very decidedly. "I ain't hankerin' on losin' myself with the wind freshenin' as it's doin' now, for in less'n an hour the *Hylow* will be haulin' off into deeper water, if Cap'n Ben has n't lost his head since I saw him last. I reckon we'd better give it up as a bad job, Joe; it was n't us as plunked the dory inter a trawl boat, so we won't be called on to explain whether we'd shifted our eyes inter the back of our heads."

"You're right, Bob; it won't pay to spend good time huntin' after what the cook lost, though it strikes me it would n't be a bad idee to wind up the business, for there'll be no more trawlin' till after we've had a bit of wind." "If we can't strike a dory, how do you reckon we'll be able to sight a trawl-buoy?" Bob asked impatiently, and then, as if the matter was settled beyond discussion, he took up a second pair of oars as he seated himself on the forward thwart.

"Listen out for the *Hylow's* bell," Joe said as he swung the dory around, much as if knowing exactly how to steer for the schooner when it was impossible to see a boat's length in either direction, and Seth asked timidly of Mr. Doak, who was sitting with his chin in his hands, thus making the hump on his back appear unusually large:

"S'posen they could n't find the vessel, sir?"

"They would n't be the first fishermen that got lost in a fog, nor they won't be the last," the cook replied gruffly.

"But what would we do if we did n't find the *Hy-low?*" the lad persisted, and Mr. Doak shrugged his shoulders as if he would bury his head completely.

"I reckon you can work it out as well as me. I've seen a couple of men after they'd been pullin' 'round in a fog for four days, an' you can take my word for it that they were n't pretty to look at. But we'll pick up the *Hylow* all right this trip, lad, so don't begin to hunt after trouble. We're mighty lucky in not havin' Ezra with us, else he'd be provin' by some sign or another, that we was bound to go the same

way many other good men have gone before us. Fishin' off Sable Island Bank ain't the safest style of gettin' a livin' in this world."

But for the apparent unconcern of Bob and Joe, the two boys would have been thoroughly frightened, for the tone in which Mr. Doak had spoken, rather than his words, caused them to feel decidedly uncomfortable in mind.

"Don't get inter the dumps 'cause we've come across a bit of fog," Bob said cheerily as he noted the expression on Seth's face. "You're bound to see considerable of this kind of weather before the Hylow makes the home port, an' may as well get used to it at the start."

By this time there was good evidence that Bob Ahearn had read the weather indications correctly when he predicted an easterly wind. Already it was freshening; the seas were growing choppy, and more than once did a green one pour water enough over the bow of the dory to suggest what might happen.

"Get to work with that bailin' dish, one of you kids!" Bob cried when there were six inches or more of water in the bottom of the boat. "Do you allow that we'll get along more lively if we carry sich a shiftin' cargo?"

It was a positive relief to have something with which to occupy their minds and hands, and both lads scrambled for the tin can that was floating about. The wind chilled them until their water-laden garments were like coverings of ice, and exercise was welcome.

One-one-four succeeded in getting hold of the can first, and he worked with a will, but without succeeding in lowering the water because of the spray which came over the bow almost continuously.

"Take my hat, Seth," and Joe gave the lad his sou'wester. "It's worth a dozen footy things like that 'ere can, when you 're tryin' to lift water, though it makes what you might call an expensive bailer."

With the two working the best they knew how, and Mr. Doak lending a hand now and then, it was possible to throw out the water as fast as it came inboard; but if the wind should increase to a gale it seemed a question whether even all three could keep the dory free.

"What would you do if she filled?" Tim asked, after having worked until the blood in his veins was heated.

"Then it would be a case of gettin' out alongside an' hangin' on to the gunnel, as Joe an' I had to do for a couple of hours last fall. It's astonishin' how much a full dory will carry when you're holdin' on from the outside."

"Was it a gale like this when you had to do

that?" Seth asked in a tremulous voice, and Bob replied with a hearty laugh:

"Bless your heart, lad, this ain't any relation to We're only gettin' what might be called a good breeze, though I 'm thinkin' it 'll freshen enough to suit even Cap'n Ben 'twixt now an' mornin'. When Joe an' I went out-board it was what you might call heavy weather; but we had n't got inter the scrape through any cheap cook's lubberly handlin' of a boat. We was runnin' trawls in a fog pretty nigh as thick as this, when slap came one of them Miquelon half-breeds right over us—the same game Abram was tryin' to play, though as luck would have it she did n't strike us plumb amidships as he did. It was more of a glancin' blow, an' when she slid off inter the fog Joe an' me had jest nothin' more'n a dory full of water-oars an' every blessed thing gone. It looked like we'd got through with the fishin' business for good an' all; but there was sense enough left in us to get over the gunnel without makin' too much of a kick sich as might have sent her to the bottom, an' there you can bet we held on for all that was in us."

"It was n't what you might call a pleasant kind of a tea-party," Joe broke in, taking up his portion of the story. "Bob he kept on howlin' 'cause it was too damp to smoke, an' between whiles we yelled

the best we knew how, thinkin' there might be a chance of wakin' Abram, who was asleep on board. It was the *Mary Willard* we'd shipped in."

"If Abram had been asleep you would n't be makin' an idjut of yourself now," Mr. Doak interrupted
sharply. "I'm allowin' there ain't another man between here an' the Georges who could have heard the
yippin' out er two half-drowned kittens that you was
sendin' forth. If I had n't been 'tendin' to business
right up to the Queen's taste, I'd like to know what
would 'a become of you."

"Right you are on that tack, an' I'm the lad that's willin' to give you credit for it!" Bob cried cheerily. "My, my, but your ugly face did look mighty fine when we saw it over the rail as you steered the Mary down on us to a delicate turn! Don't it strike you that we ought er be hearin' somethin' of the Hylow by this time?"

"I'm allowin' that she lays more to the east'ard, an' I thought the same when Joe laid his course; but it was n't for a cook to duff in when two sich giltedged fishermen as you was runnin' things."

"An' you did jest right!" Joe cried emphatically.
"I'm hopin' you'll allers have as good sense. "If anythin', she's to the west'ard of us as we're headin'."

"I'm allowin' we'd show good sense by changin'

our course if we don't pick up the sound of her bell before a great while," Bob interrupted as he bent forward in a listening attitude. "'Cordin' to my way of thinkin', she should be about abreast of us on one side or the other by this time."

Nothing save the whistling of the wind and the surging of the waters as they were being lashed to a foam came out from that curtain of vapor, and as the moments went by an expression of anxiety crept over the faces of the men, for there was more of danger in the situation than they would have been willing to admit.

Tim, who had been in the bow, now crawled aft that he might be by the side of his friend, and Seth whispered as the two snuggled close together:

"It looks as if we were playin' in hard luck, don't it?"

" Why?"

"'Cause we can't find the *Hylow* in this fog, an' if the wind grows much stronger I don't believe we'll be able to keep the dory afloat."

"Now look here, Seth," One-one-four said, earnestly, pressing his friend's arm as if to emphasize the words, "don't get into the habit of layin' down when things begin to grow a little rough, else you'll never get along as you ought er. This ain't the only time Bob an' Joe have been caught out in the fog, an'

there's nothin' to prove that they won't find the schooner same's they've allers done. Now——"

At that moment it was possible to hear, far away to the eastward, the notes of a bell, and Mr. Doak said in a tone of quiet sarcasm as he fumbled under the stern-sheets for the horn which he knew was always kept there:

"Of course I don't 'mount to anything as a cook, an' it 's certain I ain't anywhere nigh bein' a sailor same 's some 'round here claim to be; but I 'm not sich a bloomin' idjut that I can't come within half a dozen points when guessin' as to where the Hylow is. These 'ere fishermen who know it all, an' can't learn the least little bit of a thing, are the boys to pull a fellow through in a fog storm!"

"I'm willin' to own right up that I was wrong,"
Joe said with a laugh which had in it more of relief
than of mirth, as he swung the dory around. "Of
course I knew there was n't any great call to be so
terribly pertic'lar when we had a navigator like Mr.
Doak aboard, an' so I'll allow I got careless. Tim,
keep that horn a-tootin' so's to coax whoever's at
the bell to keep it goin', an' we'll put you aboard the
Hylow in time for the genial an' accomplished steward of the ship to mix somethin' for supper that we
can eat without takin' chances of pullin' out all our
teeth. Now drive her, Bobby!"

Then the two buckled down to the oars with a will, although it was not possible to drive the dory very much because of the wind and waves which seemed bent on holding her back. More than once before it was possible to see the spars of the *Hylow* through the fog, did a "green one" come aboard in such volume that nothing but the liveliest kind of work at bailing saved her from being swamped.

It was to Tim as if his heart was in his mouth until the schooner loomed up amid the fog close aboard, and no sooner was his fear lest they might be lost in the bewildering vapor allayed, than he began to question in wonder and terror as to how it might be possible to board the *Hylow* now that she had been found, for the sea was so heavy by this time it seemed certain the dory would be crushed to splinters against the vessel's side.

To the three men this was such a simple matter that they did not stop to consider it, and in a twinkling the dory was hoisted high in the air, to be speedily dropped on the nest of boats which were lashed to the deck, after which the boys clambered out, Tim feeling ashamed because he had been taken aboard as if he was a child, instead of coming over the rail in proper fashion.

Because five had come in one boat, bringing no fish, all hands knew full well that some accident had

occurred, and Bob and Joe were called upon for explanations; but Mr. Doak, motioning to Tim and Seth, scuttled away to the galley, saying when the boys had followed him:

"What's the sense of hangin' 'round waggin' your tongues over my runnin' the trawl-dory down? Every cheap sailor aboard will think he's licensed to poke fun at me; but I'd like to see the biggest of 'em say a word in this galley. I would n't let on to Bob or Joe, but I know as well as they do that it was a lubber's trick for me to do, though there'll be trouble, an' a good deal of it, if any of this crowd rubs it in too thick."

Then Bob came into the galley in search of his pipe, for there was evidently no idea in his head that it would be well to change his water-soaked garments for dry ones, and Tim expected to hear him make some remark relative to the cook's awkwardness; but in this the lad was mistaken.

"It's a good thing that all the boats are in," he said as he began to fill his pipe. "The skipper believes we're goin' to have a nasty night, an' counts on clawin' off shore as soon as it can be done."

"What did he say 'bout losin' the dory?" Mr. Doak asked, anxiously.

"Never a word. He asked if we'd lost a boat, an' Joe told him yes, which ended it, perhaps on account

of his feelin' a bit fussed about the schooner. It stands to reason he don't want to run plumb out to sea, an' yet that's what he's got to do."

"Unless he heads her for Halifax," Mr. Doak suggested.

"That's a harbor he said he'd never make agin, unless it was the only one open. We had sich a row there the last time that he'll fight shy of the place as long as he can."

"He'd better take the chances of goin' there, than steerin' due south," the cook said with an ominous shake of the head, as if to intimate that he could give yet more weighty reasons if it was necessary. "I reckon we'll be gettin' under way mighty soon?"

"They 're at it now," Bob replied as the tread of heavy feet told that anchor was being weighed.

"Then it stands us in hand to get a move on, lads," Mr. Doak cried, much as though only then he remembered he had shipped as cook. "What ain't ready within half an hour will have to wait over till mornin', I'm thinkin'," and he poured into the huge pot a supply of coffee such as would have provided Tim's family with that beverage during an entire month.

Surely Mr. Doak did "get a move on" that afternoon; he went around the narrow cuddy like a flash, apparently doing half a dozen things at the same moment, and it seemed to Tim as if the Hylow had

hardly more than been gotten under way, before he passed the word for the "first half" to come below.

"Better stay where you are, lad," the cook said when Tim would have gone on deck in order to give those who had been summoned a clear field for their eating. "Everythin' is awash up there by this time, an' you could n't get half way to the main hatch before your feet would be knocked from under you. Crawl inter your bunk, you two lads, an' when the gentlemanly boarders have filled their selves up we three'll have a bite."

"Are we goin' to leave all the trawls behind?"
Seth asked as he crept into the narrow bed.

"For sure, lad, an' mighty lucky we are that it's nothin' more. Cut an' run is the rule on this bank when the wind comes off to the east'ard, an' if we'd staid out there in the fog an hour longer we'd been in for a nasty night of it, with little hope of ever fishin' aboard the Hylow agin."

Then Captain Ben and those who were privileged to eat with him, or, in other words, the "first half" came down to table, and the stowaways lay still as mice, believing it would be better if they were neither seen nor heard.

CHAPTER VIII.

AN UGLY SCRIMMAGE.

Even though the leaping and straining of the schooner had not told them, the boys would have understood from the conversation of those at the table that the *Hylow* was running with the wind abaft the beam, and making decently heavy weather of it.

It was a matter of indifference to Tim and Seth, whether it would be a case of running, laying to, or making port; but Mr. Doak was more curious, and, presuming upon his long acquaintance with Captain Ben, ventured to say in what he intended should be a careless tone:

"I'm allowin', Cap'n, that we'll see Halifax if this 'ere wind holds too strong for fishin'."

"If you do, it'll be 'cause I can't help myself," the master of the Hylow replied curtly. "There are some aboard this schooner who must bear in mind that when we put into port in September I allowed it'd be the last time, 'cept it was to put off cargo or take on stores. When the crew of a Portland fisherman think there's nothin' left for 'em to do but

buck up agin a crowd of Gloucestermen, makin' fools of themselves with the idee of showin' who can raise the biggest row without gettin' into jail, it's time our fleets kept out of harbors while we're on the Banks."

"I reckon you're right, Cap'n. I reckon you're right," Abram said meekly, and with a certain note of apology in his voice; "but all the same this night promises to be decently rough for outside work."

"Not so bad as was this crew that night," Captain Ben said curtly. "Unless I'm losin' my memory, there's a certain half-cripple of a cook who undertook, the last time we made Halifax, to buck agin a policeman who counted on takin' a lot of brawlin' sailors to the lock-up, an' it ain't for him to figure how rough the night may be before us, 'cause nothin' can come up to the time you lads distinguished yourselves in Halifax."

"Well now, Cap'n Ben," Abram began in an injured tone, as he wedged himself on his private stool between the stove and the bulkhead. "It ain't no ways right for you to call me half a cripple on 'count of my back's bein' what you might call crooked. I'm allowin' I can hold my own agin the most of 'em aboard this 'ere schooner."

"Yes, Abram, that's the trouble with you. You're always allowin' you can hold your own agin anybody; but when you come right down to dots you know as well as I do that you ain't built for fightin'."

"Nor for handlin' a dory, when it comes to that," Bob Ahearn said with a laugh. "When them as calls themselves sailors gets to makin' one boat climb right up over another, an' that other runnin' trawls, it's time to reef down, 'cordin' to my way of thinkin'."

Mr. Doak did not think it advisable to make any reply to this remark, but screened his face from view so far as might be by the stovepipe, and a moment later the master of the *Hylow* went on deck, leaving the remainder of the first half yet at table.

"So he's goin' to put us outside in this smother by way of gettin' even for what was done in Halifax," Ezra Snow grumbled when he believed the captain was not within ear-shot. "It would n't surprise me a little bit if he kept on runnin' jist for the sake of showin' who's skipper, an' a fine time we'll have of it. What's the sense of havin' all four lowers on her if we're only to stand off the Banks? We'll be makin' fifteen knots two hours from now, an' find ourselves on the Irish coast before this blow is over, for, 'cordin' to all signs, we're goin' to have a tough one."

"What would you do with her, Ezra, if you was skipper?"

"Give her a double-reefed mains'il with a fore an' jib, an' even then we'd be gettin' into deep water too fast."

"Perhaps it might be a good idee for you to mention to the skipper what you know about handlin' a fisherman," Abram said in a tone of mild sarcasm, "an' most likely he'd ask if you would n't be so kind as to take charge of her till we got the proper kind of weather agin."

"If I was the man as tried to take a dory to sea, an' lost her at that, it strikes me I would n't be quite so free with my tongue," Mr. Snow said curtly, and then he followed the captain.

When the second half came below they reported every indication of a nasty night, and were by no means backward in grumbling because the captain had decided not to make port. Mr. Bates had very little to say on the subject, but that little was what might have been expected from the man.

"Ben Willard counts himself an almighty smart skipper I s'pose; but he has n't given any very strong show of it since I came aboard. There's more'n he who knows Sable Island Bank, an' a pile what don't do so much braggin' would have sense enough to make port on a night like this."

No one made any reply to this remark. Some of the Hylow's crew had sailed with Jerry Bates before; very many of them knew him by reputation, and, because of the exhibition of temper which he had already given, none were favorably disposed toward him, as perhaps he suspected by their silence whenever he aired his opinions.

The second half were off duty, and it would not be their trick on deck for an hour or more yet; therefore all remained in the cuddy after the meal was finished, smoking, and lounging on the lockers or in the bunks, while Mr. Doak and the boys took their turn at table. Mr. Bates, as if bent on making himself as disagreeable as possible, took possession of Abram's stool, pulling it out from behind the stove and placing it at the foot of the companion-way, where every one who moved about must necessarily crowd past him.

"How do you reckon I'm goin' to do any work in this 'ere cuddy, small as it is, with you skulkin' under foot?" Mr. Doak asked angrily, as he seated himself at the table, his back almost touching Mr. Bates's knees, with Tim at his right and Seth at his left hand.

"I don't know how you're goin' to do it, an' care less," the surly Jerry replied. "If you've got any rule aboard this 'ere schooner tellin' where a man'll spend his time an' where he sha'n't, I'd like to have it printed down so's to see it without too much

trouble. It's my trick below, an' I'm countin' on stoppin' here."

"I don't know as there's any cast-iron rule," Abram grumbled as he heaped the boys' plates high with food; "but it's generally allowed that decent sailors'll keep out from under the cook's feet. How do you reckon I can get 'round this cuddy with you settin' there?"

"I don't see you tryin' to get 'round very lively just now. What do you want? Eat an' work at the same time?"

Mr. Doak evidently thought it advisable to hold his peace rather than provoke a quarrel, for it was evident Jerry Bates would not be displeased at indulging in a row if he had the shadow of a provocation. He remained at the foot of the companion-way doggedly, as if to show that he claimed the right to remain wheresoever he chose, puffing clouds of smoke deliberately in Seth's face until the lad nearly lost the desire for food.

It could readily be seen that the surly sailor had succeeded in making the occupants of the cuddy feel decidedly ill at ease, for instead of spinning yarns, discussing the possibilities of the cruise, or complaining of this thing or that, as would ordinarily have been the case, all remained silent save Mr. Doak, who strove unsuccessfully to carry on a cheery conversa-

tion with the lads. The captain of the galley even went so far in the effort as to criticise adversely his own handling of the dory which had been lost, and strove to provoke Tim into describing his sensations while floating on the crest of the wave when Bob was struggling to bring him, the cook, out from beneath the overturned boat.

Tim replied to every question which Mr. Doak asked, but did not venture more than that, and, as a natural consequence, the conversation was not spirited, until Ezra Snow, who was occupying one of the bunks, finally felt called upon to remark:

"It's a mighty bad sign when you find a kill-joy among a crew of this size. I've noticed more'n once, for I've run up agin a few of them cattle in my time, that when you get 'em aboard there's not only bad luck in fishin', but everythin' else goes wrong. If I was one of them 'ere ducks as makes laws for the rest of the people, I'd keep folks like that in jail durin' the fishin' season so's they would n't take the bread out of honest people's mouths.

"Is it me you're callin' a kill-joy?" Mr. Bates asked in a threatening tone as, rising to his feet, he kicked the stool across the narrow cuddy, splintering it into a dozen pieces.

Ezra Snow did not appear very much alarmed by

such a show of temper. He pretended to light his pipe; but it was easy to see that he kept a sharp watch over Mr. Bates's movements as he replied:

"I'm allowin' that them as sich a name fits can take it that I had 'em in my eye, if you're so disposed, an' it don't seem as if there was any great call for me to go out of my way in order to beat sense into them as don't care to understand."

"It's time some of you chump fishermen were made to understand how to treat your betters!" Mr. Bates cried, his face paling with passion, and Ezra rose leisurely to his feet, laying his pipe with exaggerated care on the locker beside him, as he drawled:

"If you're countin' on givin' any lessons in perliteness, I reckon it's about time when you'd better begin, seein's I ain't no ways busy just now."

The speaker was standing less than three feet from where Seth sat, and it would not have been a difficult matter for Bates to have passed the lad without interfering with him. Instead of making any attempt at doing this, however, he leaned across the table, raising his hand to strike Mr. Snow just as the schooner plunged down from the crest of a wave. In a twinkling he was thrown, or assisted himself to be thrown, directly upon Seth, the two falling to the deck at the feet of Ezra, with Jerry Bates uppermost.

There was a shriek of pain from the boy, an exclamation of rage from the man, and then, while still prostrate upon the deck, Bates dealt the lad a wicked blow full in the face as he cried savagely:

"Get in my way, will yer? I'll show you how to keep your place!"

He had raised his hand to strike again when Ezra leaped directly upon him, forgetting, evidently, that Seth was underneath, and during three minutes or more the two men struggled and fought across the cuddy floor most desperately.

Then their shipmates, recovering from the stupefaction which had come with the first attack, took a hand in this scrimmage by pulling the two men apart and to their feet.

It was to Tim something most terrible, this battle in that narrow place while the schooner stormed along, rising abruptly now, and again falling sharply into the trough of the heavy seas; everything movable thrown here and there by the struggle of the combatants, and above all the terrible imprecations of the sailor who seemed eager for a fight. Master Jones was flung beneath the table by the side of Seth during the short combat, while Abram received a blow—for Bates was striking right and left without regard as to whom he hit—which sent him fairly on top of the stove. The huge pot of coffee was

overturned, and the table entirely cleared of dishes.

Reuben Hardy had grappled with Bates while his dory-mate took charge of Ezra, who by this time was in a raging passion, and while the two angry men were thus held, each powerless to work the other a mischief, Bates gave vent to the direct threats of what he would do with the crew of the *Hylow*, or even her captain, if any one dared interfere with him again.

"I can tell you what 'll happen to you this blessed minute if you don't keep your ugly mouth shut!" Reuben Hardy cried impatiently as he got a firmer hold from behind on Bates's throat, and, placing his knee on the sailor's back, bent him over it until the latter was like to be strangled.

Meanwhile no one had given any heed to Seth, who lay where he had fallen, making no effort to rise, or even to twist himself from beneath the feet of the men. Tim, having received an ugly bump on the head and a blow on his nose which caused the blood to flow freely, thought of no one save himself, while Abram was fully occupied in nursing an arm which had been severely burned by the boiling coffee.

"Now look here, Ezra, it ain't for you to keep this fight up," Reuben Hardy cried appealingly as Mr. Snow struggled to free himself. "You're a decent sailor, which is morn'n can be said of this whelp, an'

I'm lookin' for you to stop the row. Cap'n Ben'll take care of Bates."

"It'll be better for him if he don't try it," the angry man screamed, and Ezra, understanding that by making any attempt at punishing the fellow he would be laying himself open to nearly as much blame as if having begun the trouble, said to Reuben Hardy's mate:

"It's all right, lad. You need n't keep your hand on me. I'm through."

Then, on being released, he seated himself on the locker and proceeded to light his pipe as if nothing out of the common had occurred, although one could see by the trembling of his hands how strongly anger yet had a hold upon him.

"Now, then, a couple of you help me carry this fellow on deck," Reuben Hardy cried. "My bunk is in this cuddy, an' I ain't minded he shall stay where he don't belong; besides, it's high time Cap'n Ben knew what's been goin' on."

It was not necessary Reuben should make more than one appeal for help, because all present believed his suggestion a wise one. Despite his threats and kicks Mr. Bates was dragged out of the cuddy and thrown on deck, which by this time was awash with the spray which came over the weather-rail and the waves that were driven aboard to leeward.

Not until the cuddy was thus free of the man who had broken the peace did any one take note of the fact that Seth remained upon the deck as if unable to move. Then it was Ezra who discovered that the boy appeared to be in a serious plight.

"How is it with you, lad? Why are you stickin' to the deck when the scrimmage is over?"

Seth made no reply, and Ezra raised him in his arms until it was possible to see that he was deathly pale.

"Are you hurt bad, old man?" Tim cried, forgetting his own pain in the fear that his friend had been seriously injured.

"I'm blessed if he has n't gone an' fainted!"
Abram exclaimed. "Some of you get water. I've hear'n it said that's what's needed to bring folks 'round when they get upset."

Ezra laid his burden upon the locker as gently as the plunging of the schooner would permit, but was forced to hold him there—otherwise he would have speedily been thrown off—until the mug of water had been brought, when Abram began in a clumsy fashion to wet the boy's face with the tips of his fingers.

"I've heard about these 'ere high-toned women slumpin' off into faintin' fits when things did n't go just to suit 'em, but I never s'posed men or boys was took that way," the cook said in a tone of bewilderment. "Ain't there any society man 'round here as has had experience in this kind of business?"

"Folks say the first thing is to cut all the neck-gear, so's there won't be any trouble about the breathin'," some one suggested, and Abram at once set about unbuttoning the boy's shirt, but before having finished he had, between his awkward movements and the plunging of the Hylow, overturned the mug so that its contents struck the sufferer full in the throat. This heroic treatment, while perhaps not the proper one, had the desired effect, for immediately the lad opened his eyes, and Tim, who had begun to fear his friend might be dead, cried in a trembling voice:

"What's the matter with you, Seth? What makes you act so queer? Not hurt very bad, are you?"

"It seemed as though I was when Jerry Bates struck me in the face; but I'm all right now," and the boy attempted to sit upright, but Mr. Doak held him firmly down.

"Stay where you are, lad, till we're sure you ain't goin' off into one of them spasms agin, for that's where you catch us in a weak point, seein's we don't know how to tackle it. Now when you're feelin' good an' strong I'll give you your head. My, my, but that was a wicked blow he gave you under the

ear!" and the cook stepped aside slightly that all might see where the reddened skin was puffing up.

"I'm all right now, 'cept there's a good deal of ache left," and as Abram released his hold the lad struggled to rise to his feet, but it was as if his legs gave way beneath him, and he would have fallen to the deck if Mr. Doak had not caught him.

"It seems you ain't quite yourself after all, lad. I reckon we had better get you into one of the bunks."

"There's somethin' the matter with my leg," Seth said, striving unsuccessfully to repress a moan of pain.

"I reckon you're a bit shaky on it, seein's how you got the worst of that 'ere scrimmage. It did n't come into my head that that brute of a Bates an' Ezra had you underneath 'em, till it was all over. If you'll bunk in there a bit I'll set the coffee goin'. What you want is to mug-up jest now."

"There's somethin' the matter with my leg, Mr. Doak," Seth persisted, and there was a note of anxiety in Ezra's voice as he said in a tone of command:

"Get back there on the locker, an' let me see whether you've made a mistake or not. I'm allowin' there's been a chance for you to break your leg, but it don't kind'er seem possible."

Ezra Snow laid no claim to being skilled in such

matters, although he had more than once assisted in setting, after a clumsy fashion, bones that had been broken on shipboard, but only the most superficial examination was necessary to convince him that Seth had indeed told the truth, whereupon he exclaimed in a tone of fear:

"It's a fact, mates, the poor lad's leg is broken, an' it seems to me it's a bad job. Clean out one of them 'ere bunks, an' put all the blankets you've got into it."

Every person in the cuddy sprang to obey this command, and in a very short time the injured lad was lying at full length on as comfortable a bed as could be had aboard the schooner, while Abram, with a tin basin of water, was standing by bathing the sufferer's forehead lest he should faint again.

"Now hold him in, a couple of you, so's he won't shake about, an' I'll find Cap'n Ben; he's the only man aboard who can tackle a job like that."

Tim was so sorely distressed that he could not give words to the sympathy which was in his heart, but stood helplessly by, watching every movement that was made, and wishing most fervently it might be possible for him to do something toward relieving the suffering which he could see written on his companion's face. It seemed to him as if Ezra would never return with Captain Ben, so slowly did the

seconds pass, and it was as if a full hour had elapsed before the master of the *Hylow* entered the cuddy.

"It won't take much more to make me believe that Jim Sullivan really hoodooed this crew when he said good-bye to Ezra," the captain exclaimed as he came down the companion. "First we run into fog when all the trawls are set; then we lose a new dory by Abram's foolishness, and, worst of all, have got aboard a brute that don't deserve to consort with respectable fishermen. How is it with you, lad?" he asked as he took Seth by the hand. "Feelin' kind er down in the mouth, eh?"

"I got hurt, sir, an' it aches pretty bad."

"I reckon there's no lie about that. If what Ezra told me is true, you'll have to stand a bit more of the ache, seein's how fishermen are pretty rough doctors. We'll have you done up shipshape just as quick as possible, for it won't be the first broken bone I've set on the Banks, though I don't know that I ever tackled one in a livin' gale, for that's what we're swarmin' through now."

Captain Ben began his work by ordering Ezra to tear into strips suitable for bandages such of the blankets as were most worn, and then, calling Abram to assist him, he set about undressing Seth.

While this was being done Tim stood helplessly by, eager to be of some assistance, and yet knowing there was nothing he could do. It was found that the bones of Seth's right leg had been broken just below the knee, and the idle ones in the cuddy were set to work fashioning thin strips of wood which could be used as splints. Not until everything was ready at hand did Captain Ben begin the difficult portion of his task—drawing the bone into place—and as he did so he said soothingly to the lad:

"Yell all you want to, my boy, for I've got to hurt you a bit now. Tim, you stand by with some water in case he'll be wantin' a drink, an' both of you are to grit your teeth hard, rememberin' that in a few minutes the painful part of this 'ere job'll be over."

Seth bore up wondrously well, or so Tim believed. One-one-four was proud of his mate because he held his peace when the agony was greatest, but that he suffered severely could be told by the great drops of perspiration which were forced out on his forehead.

"Try not to think of it, Seth," One-one-four whispered. "Remember 'bout your Uncle Joshua's comin', an' what a high old time you 're goin' to have livin' on the fat of the land with nothin' to do. Kind er keep in mind how much worse off you 'd be if the steamship fellows had got hold of you, an' sent you back to Liverpool. Forget it, old man, forget it!"

"I wish I could," Seth said as he struggled bravely to choke back a cry of pain. "I wish I could; but they sha'n't hear me make any noise, no matter how much he hurts me."

Rough in his ways though Captain Ben was, he did his work with a certain womanly tenderness, soothing Seth by words as best he could, and One-one-four then decided that the world of Portland did not know half of the skipper's good qualities.

"I bet I'll blow his horn when I get back!" Tim whispered to Seth when, the bones having been drawn into place, and the splints laid on to hold the limb immovable, the master of the *Hylow* deftly put on the rough bandages. "Feel better, don't you?"

"It aches pretty bad, Tim, but don't you be afraid I'll holler, 'cause I won't."

"You've held up like a hero through the worst of it. Now when I'm through, an' you've got nothin' to do but stay where you are, you're goin' to keep your upper lip stiff, as a lad should." Then to the cook he added: "There, Abram, I reckon that's done in what you might call proper Banker's fashion. It ain't tied up like a doctor'd do it, but I'm allowin' the bone's in shape, an' that's the biggest part of the battle. The lad must be made fast in the bunk so he won't fetch away, an' it strikes me the best thing

to do is to get a spare jib out of the lazaret; pack that in behind him, an' nail a board on fore an' aft to make certain he won't be pitched out, 'cause the *Hylow's* likely to do some high an' mighty tumblin' before mornin'."

"Then you ain't goin' to take her into port," the cook said as if he was just a trifle disappointed.

"It could n't well be done to-night even if I was so disposed, which I ain't. In the mornin' we'll kind er turn this thing over, an' see what we'd best do. Till then, look to it that he don't have a chance of bein' knocked 'round. Tim, hold your mate steady till his bunk's fixed up, an' after that take care of him."

Then Captain Ben went out on the wave-swept deck once more, and Abram set about obeying the orders which he had given.

CHAPTER IX.

THE INVALID.

Not until the invalid had been so packed into the bunk that it was impossible for him to be tossed about, however violently the schooner might leap or roll, did any of the galley's occupants speak, save when Tim whispered words of encouragement to his crippled mate.

Ezra and Abram had folded and rolled the spare jib until it fitted into the bunk, filling up all the space even with the deck timbers, save so much of the width as was occupied by Seth. Then, with a board nailed on the front and rising twelve inches or more in height, the helpless lad was in such snug quarters that unless the *Hylow* turned a complete somersault it would be impossible to throw him out.

"Nobody but Ben Willard would have thought of such a trap as this 'ere," Mr. Doak said when, his task completed, he steadied himself against the violent motion of the vessel in order to admire his own handiwork. "It was a-puzzlin' me to know how we could lash him down, 'cause it stands to reason that a lad with a broken leg has got to be kept in one position till the bones begin to weave together, so to speak. I ain't what you might call a doctor, havin' no leanin' that way, an' I'm kind er puzzled to know how it is that two pieces of bone can be made into one, unless they sprout same as potatoes do, an' come together that way."

"Who ever heard of a bone sproutin'?" Ezra asked in a tone of disdain. "It's a good thing you don't lay any claims to bein' a doctor, 'cept doctor of the galley, 'cause your ignorance does really give me a pain. How're you feelin', lad, by this time?"

"Oh, I'm all right," Seth replied bravely, as he twisted his head into the pillow formed of blankets lest any one should see the tears in his eyes.

"Seth's got sand, that's what's the matter," One-one-four said in a tone of admiration and approval. "But what about that big, overgrown bully that put him in this shape? What's goin' to be done to him? If Cap'n Ben counts on standin' round an' lettin' that duffer break people all up whenever he takes it into his head, then I'm through with bein' a fisherman, an' never want any more of the business. I wonder why Bob Ahearn don't come here?"

"He an' Joe Barker are at the wheel, lad, an' will

I've got to have a taste of that 'ere work when their time's up, I reckon I'll fire in a little coffee, an' get a mouthful of smoke, for it ain't goin' to be any picnic to stand at the helm of the *Hylow* durin' the next two hours."

"You'll be mighty lucky if you have a chance to mug-up before you go," and Abram set about replenishing the huge pot. "In all my fishin'—an' I've been in some snug places on the Banks—this is the first time a man ever caught me when he could n't mug-up as often as he pleased, an' it's all through that pirate of a Jerry Bates! Just look at this 'ere deck! Them planks was as clean as a whistle when that miserable bunch of bones began his funny business."

"I'm allowin' that Jerry'll put in what you might call a reasonably stiffish time of it from now out," Ezra interrupted. "You don't hear Cap'n Ben ravin' an' tearin' 'round 'cause this poor youngster's bones have been broken by that bloomin' pirate, an' that 's a sign he 's keepin' up a heap of thinkin'. When the skipper lets off steam you need n't have any great anxiety about his doin' anythin' very rash; it's when he holds his tongue an' looks kind er soft-like that mischief's brewin'. If Jerry Bates don't get all that's comin' to him before this 'ere

cruise is ended, then I'll agree never to put my faith in signs agin, no matter what turns up."

"Where is Bates now?" Abram asked wrathfully, as if it was in his mind to deal out punishment instantly.

"In the after-cabin, most likely, sittin' down there thinkin' he's the only thing on earth," Ezra Snow replied. "He's a bird, he is! How're you feelin' now, sonny?"

"Look here, Mr. Snow, of course it stands to reason he ain't feelin' pretty good," Tim said, understanding that his mate did not dare to speak lest he should betray signs of suffering. "There ain't no feller with a broken leg, an' caged up in the way he is, that would be whistlin' very loud."

"Right you are, Timmy; but don't you see somehow it seems as though it was kind er heathenish if we did n't ask once in a while how he was gettin' along? He's showed hisself pretty much of a man, an' don't you forget it. I'm allowin' all hands of us'll turn to an' make things pleasant for him, just as soon as he can wiggle 'round a little, that is, if the cap'n don't put him ashore."

"How could Seth go ashore?" Tim asked quickly and fearfully.

"Well, I ain't meanin' as how he could go by hisself; but s'pose we run into Halifax? Why, up starts Cap'n Ben an' says, says he, 'Where's the telephone?' Some of them bloomin' fardowners says, says he, 'There's one right 'round the corner.' He'd pay his little cold cash for the chance of talkin', an' he says through the telephone, says he, 'I've got a boy down here aboard the Hylow what's had his leg broke. Send your best ambulance with three or four horses hitched to it, an' take him up to the horspitle.' Then down comes a gang of 'em as has a little kind of bed made up on two handles, you know, puts him on like he was eggs, trips out over the rail, an' in he goes into the cart. That's the way things will be done when Cap'n Ben starts out."

"Yes, but don't you know Seth has n't got money enough to pay for an ambulance even with only one horse? All the cash between us is thirty cents."

"S'pose you did n't have a single penny, it'd be all the same with Cap'n Ben, an' so far as that goes, this 'ere crew'd be willin' to have the expenses come out of their lay, or I don't know 'em," Ezra cried indignantly. "Who's goin' to ask you youngsters how much money you've got? This 'ere schooner's the Hylow, Cap'n Ben Willard master, an' when she sails into Halifax harbor them duffers are goin' to stand 'round with their eyes open, givin' us the best there is in the land, 'cause, unless they're idjuts, they've heard all about the craft that Cap'n Ben was

goin' to build. I ain't certain as they 'd charge anythin', 'cause then they 'd have a chance to crow about havin' taken care of a man out of the crack vessel of the Portland fleet."

"Could I go with Seth if he was took to the hospital?" One-one-four asked anxiously, and Mr. Snow replied regretfully:

"Now look here, Timmy, it don't stand to reason that a youngster what's whole an' sound as you are would be allowed to loaf 'round where they keep sick folks. No, you'd have to stay here. Besides, I reckon Abram has got so now he could n't run things without you. First time I 've known him when he had any chance to do much sogerin'. I reckon he 's been countin' on puttin' you to the front a good many times, so 's he could back hisself behind that 'ere stove-pipe. The wonder of it is to me how Abram gets hisself in a position to be done clean through an' through, an' yet stays only about half-baked, same as you see him now."

"If you're countin' on a mug-up before you take your trick at the wheel, Ezra Snow, you'll keep a civil tongue in your head. 'T ain't any fool's work to make a pot of coffee while the schooner's snorin' along as she is now, an' I'll slack up my efforts if you get sarcy. I'm wonderin' how it would do if I should manage to fry out a little nice piece of salt

pork for Seth? Seems as if it would do him good to have some sich delicate bit on his stomach."

"What do you say to it, lad?" Ezra asked as he bent over the invalid. "Does it seem as if a slice of juicy pork'd make you feel any better?"

"I don't want anything to eat, sir."

"Oh, come, come, now! You've got to keep filled up if you 'xpect to pull out of this! How're your bones goin' to sprout, same as Abram tells about, if you don't give 'em anything to sprout on? There's two things in this world that a man, or boy either, for that matter, should keep right up, an' them's his appetite an' his spirits. If you go 'long through this world tuned clean up to the top pitch of the fiddle, you won't see half so much trouble, an' in order to do it you've got to have a full cargo aboard—that's my doctrine."

Seth shook his head again, but did not trust himself to reply, and Tim whispered in his ear:

"Don't be afraid that they 'll be firin' things inter you that you don't want, 'cause I 'm right here to see that there 's no more funny business."

Then, while the captain of the galley was coaxing the fire in order that the coffee might the more quickly boil, the idlers discussed what would probably be the punishment dealt out by Captain Ben to Jerry Bates, for by this time it was accepted as a fact that the man who had caused all the mischief would be forced to pay some penalty for his misdeeds.

Abram insisted that he should be marooned on Sable Island, and held firm to such idea of punishment until it was suggested that Captain Ben would hardly spend so much time as would be necessary to effect a landing on that desolate strip of sand. Ezra was firmly convinced that it was the captain's duty to lash the offender in the rigging, and give him such a rope's-ending as he would never forget; while each of the others had in mind more or less severe penalties, all brutal in the extreme, as the only course that could be pursued in justice to the lad who had been injured.

It was not until the question of how Jerry Bates should be punished had been thoroughly thrashed out, that Ezra suddenly realized there must be some omen in this breaking of bones when a vessel was making her first cruise.

"I ain't certain what the sign is, 'cause I never run up agin just such a thing as this before; but it looks a good deal to me as if Jim Sullivan had done us a power of harm. You take my word for it, Abram Doak, that we're goin' to come out at the little end of the horn this trip! We begun wrong, we've kept goin' wrong, an' here we are with this poor child all wrong. Don't you ever laugh at me

when I talk about signs agin! I told you what Jim said to me, an' you turned up your nose at it; but so long as I've been to sea I've always known that when certain things come certain ways, there was bad luck or good luck to it 'cordin' to how matters worked around."

"Below there, you skulkers! Get out here an' take some of the dust!" a voice cried as the companion-hatch was shoved back. "Settin' down there livin' on the fat of the land, when your betters are workin' their fingers to the bone to keep things a-hummin'!"

"Ain't that coffee got het up yet?" Ezra asked anxiously as he began leisurely to get into his oilskins. "How do you reckon I'm goin' to stand my trick at the wheel in a smother like this, with nothin' warmin' inside?"

"Suppose you can't stand it, how 'm I goin' to help it?" Mr. Doak grumbled. "I did n't upset this 'ere coffee-pot, did I? I did n't pretty nigh scald the arm off of me doin' it, did I? An' I ain't been workin' on the fire so 's to minister to your delicate appetite, have I? But I'm to be blamed just the same, if the coffee won't boil."

"Now don't fly off, Abram. I know who upset the coffee, an' I know there's reason for your not havin' it ready, but at the same time that ain't goin' to keep the chill out of my stomach when I'm standin' knee-deep in salt water, tied up to the wheel like a bloomin' image!" Mr. Snow cried, as he deftly inserted his hand in the locker while standing in such a position that the cook could not see what he was doing, and extracted therefrom two fried pies which he secreted in the pocket of his coat. "I'm goin' out 'Where the waters boil an' roar; But my soul is not afraid."

The remainder of the men who had been idle followed him, after making the same preparations, save as to the subtraction of the pies, and a few moments later those who had been standing watch came below, the water dripping from the angles of their oil-skins, or flung about the cabin in a miniature rain-storm, as they made ready for a trick below.

"What kind of a country fair have you been havin' down here?" Bob asked, taking a mug from the swinging tray over the table and going toward the stove.

"It's a country fair that's played hob with the coffee," Abram grumbled. "You won't get any of this 'ere mixture for nigh on to half an hour yet."

"How does that happen?" Joe Barker cried angrily. "Has it got so you can't keep the pot goin' on a night like this, or are you gettin' too feeble to tend to your business?"

"Now see here, Joe Barker, an' the rest of you!" Abram cried as he wedged himself behind the stove to prevent any laying on of violent hands. "I've heard enough about this 'ere coffee, an' it's the first time since I shipped as cook that you have n't had all you could pour into you; but when a ragin' rhinoceros, like that brute of a Bates, gets to rampagin' an' knockin' things into a cocked hat generally, it ain't within the limits of reason that I should stand any abuse from the first blessed one of you!"

"Gettin' a jib up are you, Abram?" Bob Ahearn said with a laugh. "We heard somewhat about the row, an' that the poor little stowaway got his leg broke; but I did n't know it had been so serious that the coffee was spilled. However, we'll let you off this time if you'll keep knockin' right at that 'ere pot till we get a mug before turnin' in. Now tell me what it was Bates did?"

Abram was perfectly willing to play the part of story-teller, and he exerted himself to spin the affair out into a yarn which occupied his time until the bubbling inside the huge pot told that the fisherman's favorite beverage while at sea was at last ready for the drinking.

"What started him off in that way?" Bob asked when the cook was at the end of his story-telling.

"Just his natural, ugly, mean disposition. He's

been spoilin' for a row ever since he came aboard, an' now I hope he 'll get it full an' good. Do you know where he is?"

"Just turned out, I reckon. It's his watch on deck. I saw him sneak inter the cabin after the rumpus."

"Has n't Cap'n Ben done anythin' to him yet?"

"Look here, Abram, if you stick your nose out of that companion-way jest about half a minute you'll see, if you did n't know before, that this is no time to tend to anything but handlin' the *Hylow*. The breeze has freshened inter a reg'lar gale, an' I'm allowin' we're goin' to catch it warm for quite a spell."

"When we might have been layin' snug as bugs at Halifax!" Mr. Doak said mournfully.

"Oh, that's what's troublin' your mind, eh? 'Cause we didn't put into port? Well, you know what the skipper said after we came aboard from that row, an' I'm allowin' he'll keep his word. As for me, I hope he will, for it costs too much money to knock 'round port, tryin' to cut a swath with the Gloucestermen. I ain't sayin' but that we can do it, yet after it's all over I always think what a fool I've been, firin' in good money that I worked hard to earn, for a man what fishes Sable Island Bank don't get his dollars by whistlin'."

After they had refreshed themselves with coffee and tobacco, the watch lately come below spent very little time in discussing Jerry Bates and his doing, for every man understood full well that at any moment it might be a case of "all hands on deck," and such rest as could be gained immediately was all they would perhaps be able to enjoy during the coming four and twenty hours.

Therefore it was that very shortly after Ezra Snow went on duty the only occupants of the cuddy who remained awake were the two boys and Abram Doak.

The cook turned a deaf ear to Tim's entreaties that he lie down, or get into his bunk, declaring it was his business to be on hand in case the invalid should need anything, and in order to keep his eyes open he set about repairing with ratlin stuff the stool which Jerry Bates had broken:

"There's no need for you fellows to keep awake on account of me," Seth whispered to Tim. "I sha'n't want anything."

"Are you achin' very bad, old man?"

"I don't feel real good, an' that 's a fact; but it ain't so bad to have your leg broken as you might think. I should n't wonder if I went to sleep after a while. Why don't you get into your bunk? I can call you if there's any need."

"I won't do that, Seth, while you're laid out like

this. Say, s'posen you take a cup of coffee? It must be good for people, else the crew of this schooner would n't be drinkin' so much. You know what Mr. Snow said. You've got to keep your stomach full all the time, if you want to get through in shape."

Seth did not believe he really needed the coffee, but in order to please his mate he drank nearly a mugful, much to Mr. Doak's satisfaction, who said as he stood by the edge of the bunk waiting for the mug:

"There's nothin' like it, lad, whether you're sick or well. I've come to believe, in all these years of knockin' 'round the Banks, that if it was n't for coffee folks'd go mighty hungry after fish. Talk about drinkin' liquor! Some of our boys do that thing when they 're ashore, an' have got nothin' else to take up their minds, but I never saw one of 'em that did n't come back feelin' sorry for it. 'Cause why? 'Cause in the first place it did n't do 'em any good, an' in the second place they was in mighty bad shape afterwards. Now what about coffee? Take the men that's just off watch on such a night as this, same as Bob an' Joe. They 've got their insides filled with somethin' warm, an' gone to bed. Now hear 'em sleep! Why, they 're doin' a good twenty knot, an' will keep at it till it's time for their trick on deck agin. S'pose they 'd put in that much liquor? Why, they 'd be rampagin' 'round here same as Jerry Bates, an' this 'ere cuddy 'd look like it was ridin' out. I 've got through sailin' with them as drinks anythin' but coffee, though there 're times when it's mighty tryin' on a cook to keep a couple of gallons ready night an' day. Now if it so be, Seth, that you feel certain you're as nigh right as a boy with a broken leg can be, why, I'll give in to you an' take forty winks myself."

The invalid assured the cook that it was needless to remain awake on his account, and very shortly afterwards it was possible to "hear Mr. Doak sleep" in the same noisy fashion as were his shipmates.

Tim was determined he would not allow his eyes to close in slumber that night. By folding a couple of blankets over the edge of the table, and then wedging himself on the locker between that and Seth's berth, it was possible for One-one-four to hold his position despite the violent movements of the schooner; but it was much as if he had thus given an invitation to the drowsy god, for even while saying to himself that he would not under any circumstances sleep he passed over the border into dreamland.

It was a long, weary night to the invalid; because of the pain and the stimulating effects of the coffee, it was not possible to lose himself in the peaceful unconsciousness which had come upon One-one-four, and he was fully alive to all the wild tossing and careening of the *Hylow* as she fought her way through that smothering fog, over waves lashed into a fury by the easterly gale, across seas where lurked many a danger which could not be guarded against.

There were times when it seemed to Seth as if the gallant little schooner was thrown down on her beam ends; when he could look out over the board fastened to the front of his bunk, and see the sleepers on the opposite side directly above him, and then again when she rose to such an angle that he felt convinced a full half of her, from the bow aft, must be out of the water—as if she was completely up-ended.

Then, when he was hoping morning might be near at hand, came the call for those below, and he knew only two hours had passed.

It was a positive relief to see the men moving about as they got into their oil-skins, and to hear the sound of their voices, for he had been so entirely alone while all the others slept that to see the men descending the companion-way was a positive pleasure. He almost forgot the pain as he watched Ezra and his mates steady themselves against the pitch of the vessel as only sailors can, and heard them speak of the brave battle which the little craft was making, or of the

gallant manner in which she was proving herself to be the pride of the Portland fleet.

"How're you feelin' by this time?" Mr. Snow asked as, with a mug of coffee in his hand, he came to the side of the sufferer's bunk.

Tim sprang to his feet so suddenly that he was thrown headlong against the companion-steps, and no small portion of the hot liquid fell from the mug which Ezra was holding, striking him full on the face.

"I guess I must have dropped off to sleep," he said sheepishly, rising with difficulty to his feet.

"I reckon you was doin' your full share of the snorin'," Mr. Snow replied with a laugh, and then turning to the invalid he repeated the question, "How're you feelin', lad?"

"Oh, I'm a good deal better," Seth said bravely.

"I guess I'll be all right by mornin'. Is it much of a storm?"

"Well, lad, that's 'cordin' to what you mean by the word. You can't rightly call this a storm, when it's simply blowin' a livin' gale, an' the fog seems to be hangin' to the wind. It does beat all how much fog there is on the ocean! I wonder where it goes when it drifts back to the place it came from? I've often thought of that when I've been out here on the Banks with the smother so thick you could poke your finger through it an' see the hole. There's a heap of it somewhere; but I'm allowin' you're a brick, boy. There's nothin' like keepin' your upper lip stiff."

"Where's Jerry Bates?" Tim asked eagerly.
"Why don't he come down for coffee?"

"If he tries it he'll wish he had n't. The cap'n gave strict orders that he was to keep out of the cuddy till matters could be fixed up somehow in the mornin'. I don't rightly know what he's countin' on doin'. You lads may not think it's much of a punishment to deprive a fisherman of his coffee; but if you was to stand out on deck a couple of hours in a smother of water clean to your hips now an' then, with everythin' awash fore an' aft, an' the wind drivin' spray inter your face till it was like red-hot needles, you'd come to understand what it would mean not to have somethin' warm when you're through work."

"Did the cap'n tell Jerry Bates he could n't have anythin' to drink?"

"No, but he said he was to keep ---"

Just then the companion-hatch was shoved open, and a surly voice shouted:

"Hi there, Abram! Give me a mug-up! I've got orders not to go below for'ard, an' I'll hold to 'em for a spell, not because Ben Willard gave 'em,

but owin' to my bein' good an' willin' to keep away from sich a measly gang."

In silence Mr. Doak passed up the beverage, and stood under the companion waiting to receive the mug, when it had been emptied; but it did not please the genial Mr. Bates to act any part of the man on this night, for, instead of giving the mug into Abram's hand, he flung it viciously into the cuddy, striking the pot on the stove with such force that if the cook had not been exceedingly active, the second supply of coffee would have been wasted.

"If you'd knocked it over I'd have put your two eyes into one!" Abram cried in rage, and from the deck came the jeering reply:

"You can do a power with your tongue, you second-rate cook, but never saw the day when you dared stand up to a man."

"All the same I might be able to stand up to such as you, an' not make a very big try," Mr. Doak retorted, and then he closed his hatch violently, as if it did him real good to thus give his anger vent.

"That Mr. Bates'll be runnin' this 'ere schooner by mornin', if somebody don't take a reef in him," Abram said after a brief pause, and Ezra replied:

"Don't worry your head about that, Brother

Doak. Cap'n Ben'll take the kink out of his hair before he's many hours older, for he told Bob an' me so not ten minutes ago, an' mind yer, he'll keep his word!"

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CHAPTER X.

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During the night, when the men came off and went on watch, there arose another question, to their minds more serious than that of how Mr. Bates should be disciplined, which they discussed at such times as the two boys were asleep.

This was the sending of Seth to a hospital. No one doubted but that Captain Ben had treated the broken bones to the best of his ability; but it was well within the range of possibility that he had failed to do the work properly, and many of the crew, particularly those who had taken a lively interest in the lad who stowed away rather than be deported, believed he should receive skilled medical attention before it might be too late.

As a matter of course, all understood that nothing could be done on this night, but because the captain of the *Hylow* was known to be a glutton at fishing, it was a grave question whether he would spend the time to make port when he might be taking on yet more cargo.

Bob Ahearn was content with what had been done,

declaring that, so far as setting the bones was concerned, Captain Ben could do the work as well as if he had a diploma from some medical school, while Ezra Snow and Abram Doak were strong in their insistence that it was of vital importance Seth be treated in some hospital.

"It strikes me we'd better spend a few hours makin' port for the sake of settin' him ashore, than waste a good many in takin' care of him, for it stands to reason the lad'll need considerable nussin' before gettin' 'round agin."

"I reckon Tim can 'tend to that part of it," Bob said in reply to Mr. Doak's remark. He's a pretty handy lad, an' has got nothin' else to do."

"That's just it! There's plenty he can do if he has the time, an' the work of a boy helps out big now an' then. I ain't begrudgin' anythin' that Seth's needin', but at the same time it seems a pity to switch Tim off to take care of him when he'd be better ashore, an' we could have One-one-four to help 'round."

"Meanin' that you're thinkin' more of what he'll be able to do for'ard here, so's you can have a better chance to loaf, than of his lendin' a hand at dressin' down or cleanin' up."

"I don't look at it in that light at all," Mr. Doak replied emphatically. "The heft of my opinion was concernin' Seth, an' I still hold to it; he ought'er be somewhere else than aboard the Hylow."

"I reckon all that 'll be turned about pretty much as pleases Cap'n Ben," Bob replied carelessly, and then he went out into the night once more to do his share of caring for the little schooner as she battled against the wind and waves.

Mr. Bates did not show himself again during the long watches of the night; but when word had been passed that breakfast was ready for the first half, he came into the cuddy with Captain Ben, and it was whispered among the second half that the master of the Hylow had given strict orders to the ill-tempered man that he should not show himself forward save with him. So carefully did the skipper guard against any further outbreak, that he went even to the length of insisting that Bates take the place at table which was by the captain's side, where he could be checked if making any attempt to do mischief.

It was not a cheerful meal, as might be supposed. What little conversation was indulged in Captain Ben himself carried on. Tim, taking good heed to keep out of the surly sailor's way, stationed himself by the side of Seth's bunk as if to guard against a possible attack, and it was plainly seen that Mr. Doak did violence to his own feelings when he passed

either food or drink in the direction of the man who had done so much mischief.

When the second half came below, however, matters were changed entirely. The men discussed the handling of the schooner, scolding not a little because she was still kept at sea, and prophesying that the wind would not blow itself out in less than forty-eight hours, therefore it seemed a useless expenditure of labor to keep her under sail when she might have lain snugly in harbor.

During two days and nights the little schooner was buffeted by the waves, and tossed here and there by the wind, even though she was carrying a double-reefed mainsail with nothing more than a foresail and jib, until even some of the boldest of the men believed the time had come when she should run before it, or be hove to rather than hold the southerly course which had been set.

With nothing to occupy their time during the watches below, save spin yarns and smoke, all hands gave a goodly portion of their attention to the invalid, until the danger was that he might suffer from too much nursing rather than not enough. An hundred times within the twenty-four hours was he called upon to tell "how he felt," and if he had eaten all that the cook seemed to think was his duty then surely would he have died of indigestion.

As a matter of course there were hot discussions now and then regarding what would be done to Mr. Bates, for all agreed that when there was an opportunity Captain Ben would deal out something more in the way of punishment than that of keeping the surly fellow under his eye all the while.

At the first indication that the strength of the gale was broken, the *Hylow* was put about on such a course as would bring her back to Sable Island Bank, and at noon of the third day, when Captain Ben came into the cuddy to dinner and bent over the invalid as was his custom, to learn how he was getting along, he announced, as if believing the information would be cheering:

"Within another twenty-four hours, lad, we'll get to work agin, an' I'm reckonin' we'll pull down some part of this 'ere cage that 's been built up, so 's you'll have a chance to see what 's goin' on."

"Then he ain't to be took to the horspitle?" Abram asked mildly, and Captain Ben wheeled upon him suddenly:

"Have some of you old women got the idee inter your heads that there's nothin' for it but put him ashore? Are you countin' we're sich dummies that we can't look after one small lad like him, who's gettin' on fine as silk?"

"I don't say anythin' agin it, Cap'n, but only

asked if he was goin', 'cause it seems to me that 's where he belongs."

"Why?"

"Well, I can't rightly say, 'cept that's where folks are taken when they're broken up the way he is."

"Afraid you'll have too much work to do, eh, with passin' grub into him when he's close under your hand?" Captain Ben asked sharply, after which he relapsed into silence.

This was sufficient to prove to the crew of the Hylow that the skipper intended to hold to the promise he had made about not making port during the cruise, and when he left the cuddy they discussed the matter sharply, not because of their great desire to send Seth ashore, but owing to the fact that while remaining at work it would be impossible to punish Bates by discharging him, which was the sentence the men had unanimously agreed upon.

During this time, while the wind shrieked and moaned about the *Hylow* as if literally raging against her, and was mourning because of being unable to vanquish her, One-one-four had not spent his time in idleness. As a matter of course he waited upon his mate assiduously; but this occupied only a small portion of the day. When not engaged in playing the part of nurse he was careful, yes, eager,

to do whatever lay at his hand, for he now had in mind the thought that he must do double duty in order to pay for the food which he and Seth ate.

That he succeeded in pleasing the captain of the galley was shown on this third afternoon, when it seemed certain that the work of fishing would be taken up once more on the following day, for then Mr. Doak said to him:

"I don't understand how it is I got along without you all these years, One-one-four. You do save me a heap of work, an' there's no gainsayin' it. I'm as anxious as any other man to see a full cargo aboard the *Hylow*, but really I'm kind'er sorry to lose you."

"How're you goin' to lose me?" Tim asked in surprise.

"If you ain't called on deck for an odd job here an' a bit of cleanin' up there, the minute the first fish is taken, I'm out of my reckonin', an' as soon as you show yourself handy on deck, same 's you have in the cuddy, there'll be little show of my keepin' you here."

"I want to do all I can, Mr. Doak, an' it seems as if I might work in both places. You know I'm countin' on bein' a fisherman some day, an' the harder they push me along the quicker I'll get to know the business."

"Don't be afraid but that they 'll push you 'long all right, when once it's seen that you can lend a hand, an' for a matter of that kind I'm called on time an' time agin, but you'll find we ain't quite heathens aboard the *Hylow*, an' don't count on makin' a boy like you buckle down to it all the time. You've got to have some breathin' spells."

"Don't you fear but that I'll get enough of 'em," Tim said laughingly. "If Seth's leg was n't broken, perhaps he an' I could get a chance to go out by ourselves in one of the dories hand-linin'."

"I'm the one who'll prevent you from learning the trade of a fisherman," Seth said mournfully, and Tim cried sharply as he ran to the side of the bunk that he might take his mate by the hand:

"I don't want to hear such talk as that, at all. If it had n't been for you I would n't be here, so breakin' your leg don't interfere with my gettin' to be a fisherman, not a little bit."

"If we can find Uncle Joshua when the schooner gets back, I know he'll pay Captain Willard for lettin' me stay aboard."

"Pay your granny!" Mr. Doak exclaimed irritably. "Cap'n Ben ain't the kind of a man that 'll take money for what little you'll eat, pertic'larly after you've been crippled by one of the crew."

This was by no means the only conversation held

between the cook and the boys relative to their position on board. Seth returned to the subject at every opportunity, for while lying in the bunk helpless he had ample time in which to consider the matter, and it seemed to him as if he was a drag upon all hands.

It was reported by the crew, as they came into the cabin from time to time, that Jerry Bates was holding himself aloof from every one as if he was the injured person. Never once had he accosted in a friendly way either of his mates, and when it came his trick at the wheel with Ezra Snow, the latter declared that he never so much as winked during the entire time of duty.

"As cross-grained, surly, ill-tempered a man as I ever knew," Mr. Snow said as he summed up Mr. Bates's character. "I've seen some disagreeable shipmates in my time, but never one who could hold a candle to that same Bates. I'd take the meanest, mangiest yeller dog that ever lived to my bosom an' have more real love for him than for that same lump of ill-nature! If Cap'n Ben Willard thinks that by makin' Bates toddle 'round after him like a poodle he's goin' to pay up for what he did to Seth, me an' the cook, why, then I'll say there'll be trouble aboard the Hylow. Everybody knows that if there's much of any quarrellin' on a vessel durin' the first trip, it's a sign she'll be unlucky as long as she floats."

If one were to set down all the disagreeable things said by the crew about Mr. Bates, and the many complaints which were made because he was seemingly to remain on board throughout the cruise, there would be nothing in this story save that, and surely a very uninteresting tale it would be.

It was in the morning on the day after the wind had fined down into the laziest of gentle breezes that the good schooner *Hylow* came to anchor off Sable Island in much the same berth she had previously occupied, but now she was by no means the only vessel to be seen off that desolate stretch of sand.

One-one-four heard the cable let go, and, running on deck, he saw not less than twenty fishermen within range of vision, two of them being no more than half a mile away.

"I thought Cap'n Ben was the only skipper that fished down this way!" he cried in surprise as he leaned over the companion-hatch.

"You must have allowed we had a mighty soft snap of it, lad," the cook replied laughingly. "Why, I've seen a crowd of St. Pierre, Newfoundland, an' New Brunswick craft—as many as fifty,—an' every blessed one of 'em takin' from ten to fifteen thousand a day."

"Well, this looks somethin' like business," Tim cried in delight. "You ought to be up here, Seth, where you could see it. There's more dories out than a fellow could count. I should think where there's so many vessels the men would have an awful good time."

"In what way do you mean, lad?" Mr. Doak asked.

"Goin' 'round visiting', an' swappin' stories, an' all that kind of thing."

"Well, that ain't exactly what we come down here for, lad. When a craft gets aboard, say, ten thousand cod an' haddock, an' all of 'em to be dressed down 'twixt sunset an' sunrise, you can make up your mind there ain't overly much time spent in visitin'. Now that the wind 's blown itself out, an' we 're likely to have a long spell of good weather, I'm allowin' you'll see all hands humpin' till they 're so nearly done up as not to know their own names. Why, lad, it's the honest truth that I've known a man stand right up to the bench with his knife in his hand openin' fish while his eyes were shut, an' he sound asleep, bein' dead tired."

It was evident to Tim that the crew of the Hylow did not intend to spend very much time hunting up their neighbors, for the schooner was hardly more than come to an anchor before one dory after another was hoisted out-board, trawl-tubs brought from the hold, and crew after crew got away until

none save Abram and the two boys remained on board.

"Well, that's what I call jumpin' to it!" One-onefour said with a long-drawn breath of surprise. "It ain't more'n five minutes since I came up here, an' all hands are off ready to set trawls."

"Who did Bates go with?" Mr. Doak asked, as for the first time he came up the companion-way sufficiently far to have a look around.

"He an' Cap'n Ben are in that dory over there."

"Well, now, it strikes me Ben Willard is punishin' hisself a good bit just for the sake of keepin' that cross-grained mongrel with us! There's no man alive who's more pertic'lar about his dory-mate than our skipper, an' yet he's sacrificin' his feelin's rather than put ashore the sourest bunch of ill-temper that ever turned fisherman."

To Tim the scene was one of wondrous beauty, as indeed it would have been to any person who saw it for the first time. The sea was running with a long, regular surge, never a wave bearing a crest, and the wind hardly more than a summer zephyr. Perhaps it was as fair a day as those keepers of the light on Sable Island had ever seen. The Hylow lay in the midst of a floating city. The sunlight glinted and whitened the sails of the vessels until they shone like silver, and the white sides of the schooners and dories

flashed in the sun like fire as the craft rose and fell on the sweeping swell. The wonder of it was that there could be so many fish in the sea as to supply all these men who were engaged in taking them!

Some such thought must have come into Tim's mind, for he said to the cook as he gazed slowly around trying to form some estimate of the number there:

"I'm allowin' there's a good many here who won't have much dressin' down to do to-night."

"Why, lad?"

"'Cause how can all of 'em get fish enough to work on?"

"I'm willin' to bet good doughnuts against dollars, that the laziest crew in this 'ere fleet will have no less than five thousand pounds of different kinds aboard before sunset. Fish! Well, lad, I'm allowin' that the top of this 'ere bank's just covered with 'em! Now you stop to think of it. An hundred years, an' nobody knows how much longer, fishin' vessels from all parts of the country have been comin' here, an' takin' away full cargoes one season after another, yet they get as many to-day as they did the first cruise I made. Of course there are off seasons, when the cod don't seem to be plentiful, an' you'll say to yourself that you 've caught 'em all up; but as likely as not in two weeks from that time fishermen'll be takin' 'em faster'n they can dress 'em down. I'd

like to know how many million pounds has been caught right off here, an' yet this 's only a little part of the fishin' grounds. There's the Georges, Sambo, St. Pierre, 'Quereau, an' a hundred other banks, all of 'em what you might call lousy with fish. You can strike a skipper who'll say the only place he can count dead certain on gettin' a full fare is 'Quereau. The next man you talk with, say it might be Cap'n Ben, he'd allow that Sable Island Bank was the only place for him, an' so it goes. You see one cap'n knows one spot better 'n all the rest, another has his pertic'lar ground, an' so it goes. I won't undertake to tell you how many vessels there are, Frenchmen, Bluenoses, Far-downers, an' Yankees, that make a business of fishin' off here. Bless yer soul, there must be a heap of 'em, an' the next biggest puzzle is, who eats all that's caught?"

Having thus expressed himself on the immensity of the fishing business, Mr. Doak went below to attend to the duties for which he had shipped, knowing full well that when the crew returned a large quantity of food would be necessary in order to satisfy their hunger; but District Messenger One-one-four, eager though he was to perform all the labors within his power as a means of "squarin' accounts" for his mate and himself, could not take his eyes from the scene. He stood near the companion where it would

be possible to tell the invalid of this thing or that which particularly attracted his attention, drawing in deep breaths of pleasure as he viewed what was really an ideal picture.

Later in the day, when Tim had taken up his duties in the cuddy, Bob Ahearn came alongside, his dory loaded gunwale-deep, a few moments after Ezra Snow had arrived, and cried cheerily:

"Any new signs to-day to prove that the Hylow is bound to strike bad luck, Ezra?"

"Well, I have n't been lookin' spec'ally for 'em, but I did happen to run across two of the skates we had to leave the other night, an' it seems as though that ought'er be a pretty good sign. They 're the first trawls I ever picked up after they 'd been left, an' both was so heavy with fish that there was n't wind enough to set 'em in on to the bar."

"Picked up two trawls, eh? Well, say, that's kind'er curious, ain't it?"

"It looks that way to me," Ezra said meditatively, as he mechanically stroked the head of a huge codfish which had made up a portion of his load. "Seems to me I've heard it said that if you come across anythin' that's been lost in the sea, it's a sign you're goin' to meet a friend, or part with a friend, I declare I don't know which. There's somethin' about it, an' I'm puzzlin' my head to make out what it is."

"I'm puzzlin' my head to know how much grub Abram's got ready for us," Bob replied with a laugh, as he and Joe Barker hurriedly flung their catch into the forward pen.

"I'm noticin' that whenever you lubbers get a move on, the first thing you think about is whether the cook has looked out for you, but let all hands be layin' round here in the cuddy with nothin' to do, an' you'll chew over the uselessness of a man what keeps you from starvin'."

"Pitch on the table all you 've got; I can take care of it," Bob cried.

It was a trying day. Dory after dory came alongside laden with the harvest of the sea, and each crew paid a visit to the galley immediately after sending their catch aboard, until it seemed to Tim and Seth as if Mr. Doak could not put the food upon the table as fast as the hungry fishermen were able to clear it away.

Night came. One could not move fore or aft on the deck without literally wading through an ocean of fish, and Abram had ready that meal which, if the previous ones were not counted, should have served as supper.

"We'll fill up, lads, before beginnin' to dress down," Captain Ben cried in the tone of one who is

thoroughly well satisfied with himself, and the men tumbled below, each with some jest upon his lips, save in the case of Mr. Bates, who alone of all the party was silent and sullen.

As soon as might be after the hunger of the men had been appeased for the time being, the work of caring for the catch was begun, and not only Tim, but Mr. Doak himself took a hand in the work, which was carried on until the last cod or haddock had been salted down.

Seth remained alone in the cuddy, as a matter of course. After a time he slept, for the swish of the water as it passed the side of the schooner served him for a lullaby. Then, when it seemed to him as if he had spent a long time in slumber, he was aroused by the movements of some one near at hand—some one who took from the locker where Mr. Doak kept the cooked provisions a large supply of food, which he put into a bag.

Seth was not very wide awake; there was in his mind a dim idea that food was to be served to the men while they worked, and then his eyes closed again. The next time he returned to consciousness the cuddy was filled with the gray light of a new day, and half a dozen of the crew were sampling the contents of Abram's coffee-pot.

"I tell you we had a great time, but it was mighty

hard work!" Tim said as he leaned over the board which had been added to the side of the bunk. "I just wish you could have seen us! All hands jumpin' to it, with fish flyin' in the air, an' gurry everywhere. Four or five torches stuck 'round so's we could see, an' I did a little of everythin'. Do you know, Cap'n Ben said I lent a hand right lively. Oh my, but I'm tired though!"

"Hello, in the cuddy," some one shouted from the deck. "Is Jerry Bates down there?"

"You can bet your boots he ain't!" Ezra Snow replied. "He may not have a great deal of sense, but he 's got enough to keep out of this place, 'cept when the skipper 's in tow to save him from bein' hurt."

Then the same voice could be heard crying:

"Ahoy, in the cabin, is Jerry Bates there?"

"Now what idjut is wantin' Jerry Bates?" Mr. Doak asked fretfully. "If he's off sogerin' somewhere I'd vote to let him stay, for the only good he can do aboard this craft is to keep out of sight."

"All hands turn out! Every last one of you!" came again from the deck, and wonderingly, those who were below obeyed the command quickly, for a sailor early gets into the habit of answering a summons first and thinking about it afterward.

One-one-four considered that the call for all hands included himself, and again Seth was left alone. This time, however, for no more than five minutes, when Tim came below with an exclamation of surprise and perhaps relief:

"Now what do you think has happened, Seth? Jerry Bates has sneaked off! Must have done it while everybody was so busy workin' last night. One of the dories is gone, an' nobody knows what else he has taken with him."

In an instant Seth remembered having seen the man at the provision locker, and now he believed he knew who it was; but before he could tell the story those who had been summoned from the cuddy returned, and with them a goodly portion of the men who bunked aft, all talking excitedly regarding the disappearance of the one who had shown himself to be a brute.

"It's a pity he did n't have sense enough to go over the rail without takin' a dory," Mr. Doak said decidedly. "That makes two we've lost so far on this trip."

"An' when you get to losin' boats at the start it's a sign you'll throw over some of your catch before gettin' into port," Ezra said in a sepulchral tone.

"Oh, stow your signs!" Bob Ahearn cried laugh-

ingly. "If we've got rid of that kill-joy it's well worth the price of the dory, an' I'm willin' to pay my share for the sake of havin' him out of the schooner. Now what beats me is, how he got away without our seein' him? He must have had this in his noddle ever since we weighed anchor, an' was only waitin' for fair weather to give us the slip. Well, all I can say is I wish them as takes him aboard will keep him, for of course he's countin' on findin' a berth with some of the fishermen near about. It's a good riddance for us, an' what Ezra would call a mighty bad sign for them; but what I'm thinkin' is, how will Cap'n Ben take it? This havin' a man give him the slip, an' steal a boat at the same time, is likely to go again' his grain."

"I reckon he'll feel a good deal as you do about it, Bob," Joe Barker said as he emptied a cup of coffee down his throat. "Willin' to stand the loss of the dory for the sake of gettin' rid of that kind of lumber. How about it, One-one-four, cryin' 'cause sour-chops has turned us down?"

"I'm glad he's gone," Tim said, sleepily, as he crawled on the locker in front of Seth's bunk; "but I'm afraid Cap'n Ben'll think if it had n't been for my comin' there would n't have been any trouble, an' will kind'er lay it off on to me."

"Don't you worry, One-one-four. We're a clean

ship an' a jolly crew, an' I'll get up somethin' in the way of a Thanksgivin' dinner to-morrow to celebrate his goin'," Mr. Doak cried.

CHAPTER XI.

MISCHIEF.

Tim had supposed, if indeed he gave any heed to the matter, sleepy as he was, that, after such severe labor in the way of fishing and then dressing down, the crew of the *Hylow* would be allowed a certain time of repose; but in this he was mistaken.

As soon as breakfast had been eaten the dories were out again running the trawls, or setting others, the men jumping to their tasks as if having come fresh from a long time of idleness.

"It's a lucky thing we brought three spare dories," Mr. Doak said as he and One-one-four watched the last of the crews pull away from the schooner. "As a general rule a couple is considered enough, for them as are counted fishermen, to be lost in one cruise, though I've known a set of lubbers lose pretty nigh all of their boats by carelessness an' bunglin'. Cap'n Ben don't ever have more'n two spare ones, an' now that we're right down to hardpan, the next boat that goes will make way for idleness."

"Don't the men ever stop to sleep?" Tim asked,

and even as he spoke it was with difficulty he could keep his eyes open, interested though he was in the scene before him.

"Well, there ain't much of that kind of business done when the fishin' is on, 'cause you see it's a pretty poor kind of a sailor who can't bottle up enough when we're in port or runnin' on 'count of heavy weather. It's slap bang through it all when you're on the Banks, lad. I can't help thinkin' how comfortably off we are now that we've seen the last of Jerry Bates, for of course he'll never dare show his face anywhere near the *Hylow* agin."

"Where do you suppose he went?"

"On board some of these fishermen, with a hard-luck story as long as your arm. Most likely he'll make out that Cap'n Ben served him bad all through, or some such twaddle. He'll find enough to believe him among them as are jealous of our skipper; but they'll be sorry for their belief before Bates's been with 'em very long."

Then Mr. Doak turned his attention to the work before him; Tim set about cleaning the deck more thoroughly than it had been done, scraping the planks and timbers to free them from blood and gurry, until he had driven the desire for slumber from his eyes, when he went below to cheer Seth, knowing full well that the lad needed a comforting word.

It must have been dull work for the little fellow, lying in the bunk, unable to change the position of his body ever so slightly, thinking, thinking, thinking all the while the others were at work. The time had passed when the invalid could make merry over the fact of having escaped from the officers of the Levonia, and by this time he had before him constantly the knowledge of his mother's suffering, and the fear lest his Uncle Joshua might not find him when the Hylow made Portland again.

This last possibility troubled him not a little. It was reasonable to suppose his uncle would take passage from Liverpool on the next steamer following the *Levonia*, and, therefore, should arrive in Portland within a few days after he had left. Not finding his nephew, it was reasonable to believe he would go to his home, wherever that might be, and when Seth returned how would it be possible for the two to come together?

Much the same thoughts and fears were in Tim's mind, although he refrained from giving them words because of causing his mate pain, and again and again he said to himself that Seth should find a home with him unless—unless—, and then would come to One-one-four the memory of his mother, who might not understand that he had been carried off by the *Hylow* instead of having run away, and his fancy

would go forward into the future, wondering whether she and his father could put confidence in him again.

It was possible, however, for One-one-four to find refuge from his painful thoughts in work, but poor Seth was forced to lie there idle, unable to see anything save within the narrow bounds of the cuddy, and Tim realized that his mate might be having an exceedingly dismal time of it.

"Fishing is the nicest business in the world," One-one-four said confidently to Mr. Doak while the two were alone, "'cept when a fellow gets into it the same way I did. Now if mother knew I was here an' had been willin' for me to come, an' Seth had n't broken his leg, an' knew just where he could find his uncle when he gets back, I'd be havin' the time of my life. Say, do you think I'll turn out to be anythin' of a fisherman?"

"Of course you will, lad. You come mighty near fillin' the bill now. If you knew a little more about the business, an' had a little more experience as a sailor, an' was a bit bigger an' a good deal stronger, an' could handle a boat—why, bless your soul, you 're just about the same as a fisherman now, 'cept for them little things."

"Well, I'm tryin' awful hard, Mr. Doak, an' I'm hopin' Cap'n Ben won't be sorry he did n't turn the vessel 'round to put us ashore. Last night I worked

the best I knew how, but it don't seem as if I did much."

"I'm allowin' you helped out a good bit, lad, an' seein' is how I was there through it all, I ought'er be considerable of a judge. Now take my advice: Go below an' have a snooze, for 'cordin' to the look of things you won't get another chance 'twixt now an' to-morrow mornin'."

One-one-four was perfectly willing to follow this advice, and after telling Seth of what he had seen on deck, coupling the information with the prophecy that in a very few days it would be possible for him to be carried into the open air, he crept into the bunk nearly opposite where his friend lay. He slept as only a tired boy can until awakened by heavy footsteps on the deck above him, and when he leaped out from the narrow bunk, running up the companion-way eager to be of some assistance, he found half a dozen exceedingly angry men, among whom were Bob Ahearn, Joe Barker, and Ezra Snow. Not until after many minutes could he understand what had caused the excitement, for no one paid any attention to his questioning, so irritated were all.

Then it was he understood that several of the trawls belonging to the *Hylow* had been set adrift, the buoys having been cut from them, and, as was

only natural, every one felt positive Jerry Bates had worked the mischief.

"I'll find that sneak if I have to board every craft on Sable Island Bank!" Bob Ahearn cried in a rage. "An' once I've found him there'll be no danger of his playin' mischief with any more trawls!"

"I misdoubt whether Cap'n Ben will give you a chance to go 'round visitin'," Ezra Snow drawled. "It seems to me like as if he took that 'ere Bates right into his bosom, else why didn't he put him ashore somewhere long before this? We could have run into Halifax in no time."

It was useless for the men to scold among themselves; the mischief had been done, and their duty was to repair it as far as might be possible. Therefore, instead of reaping a harvest as would have been possible but for the destruction of their property, they were forced to spend considerable time in making new trawls, all of which involved no slight amount of labor.

In this work Tim could assist very materially, and was busy waiting upon one crew or another as they were sitting about the deck with the long length of line between them, when Captain Ben, having Reuben Hardy for a dory-mate, pulled alongside with a full load of fish.

"What's the meanin' of all this sogerin'?" he

asked angrily, coming in-board and leaving to his mate the labor of transshipping the cargo. "Have you gone out of business for the season?"

"We will be out of it mighty soon, if somebody don't get a move on," Bob replied irritably, and then he told of the mischief which had been done, saying in conclusion, "I don't know of but one man who would be sneak enough to do such a thing, an' that 's him as has got away with the dory!"

If the angry fishermen had expected to see Captain Ben fly into a rage, they were mistaken. He listened in silence to all they had to say, insisted on seeing the buoys which had been picked up, in order that he might have proof the men were not mistaken, and when it was no longer possible to doubt but that the trawls had been destroyed intentionally, said cheerily:

"It's no use cryin' over spilt milk, lads. The mischief's done, an' must be repaired. Get the new trawls out as soon as you can, an' in the meantime, I'll 'tend to this matter myself. Abram," he cried, turning toward the cook, who was standing in the companion-way, an interested spectator, "get a bite on the table for me, an' bear a hand at swabbin' out that boat when Reuben's sent the fish aboard. One-one-four, if you are minded to see what a fishin' craft is like, stow away as much grub as you'll need for

the balance of the day, an' stand by till we get ready to leave."

"What's he goin' to do?" Tim whispered to Bob Ahearn.

"Looks mightily as if he counted on huntin' out Mr. Jeremiah Bates, an' if he finds him, as I 'm allowin' he will, there'll be considerable business done. He's givin' you a chance to see the show, an' I'd rather have a seat in that 'ere dory than a ticket to the best circus that was ever put up, for there's likely to be a lively time in this 'ere fleet. Cap'n Ben ain't no angel, even if he does keep his tongue between his teeth when another man would wag it too lively.

As a matter of course Master Jones thought it necessary first to tell his invalid friend of what had occurred, and why he was to be absent for a time. Not until this was done did he pay any attention to the tempting meal which Mr. Doak set before him.

Indeed, he would have lingered so long by the side of the bunk as to have lost the opportunity of going with the captain, had not Abram literally forced him to the table as he said in a whisper:

"Stow this stuff inter you lively, lad, for you must n't lose the chance to see what is goin' on. I'm countin' you'll be the only one who can give us a clear idee of the business, seein''s how Reuben is

one of the slowest, poorest talkers I ever ran up against. As for Cap'n Ben, he'll be as mum as an oyster, no matter what kind of a racket he starts."

"You won't get into a fight with Mr. Bates, will you, Timmy?" Seth called in a low tone as One-one-four was hurrying up the companion-way, and the latter halted sufficiently long to say:

"I ain't any such fool, Seth, as to forget what class I'm trottin' in. The time may come when I can tackle a duffer like that Bates, but it won't be for quite a spell yet. Take care of yourself. Don't get down at the heel, old man, an' when I get back you shall know how all the other vessels look."

Reuben Hardy was already in the dory, which lay astern. He had swabbed her out in honor of the occasion until she was free from all the disagreeable vestiges of her calling, and, while he was not by nature an excitable man, it could readily be seen that he was far from being calm, for this going in search of a mischief-maker with a man who was likely to exact reprisals to the uttermost was considerably out of the ordinary in a fisherman's life.

Every member of the crew, save Mr. Doak, was on deck to witness the departure when Captain Ben came out of the cabin, and as Reuben pulled the dory up on her painter that those who were to take passage might drop from the stern of the Hylow com-

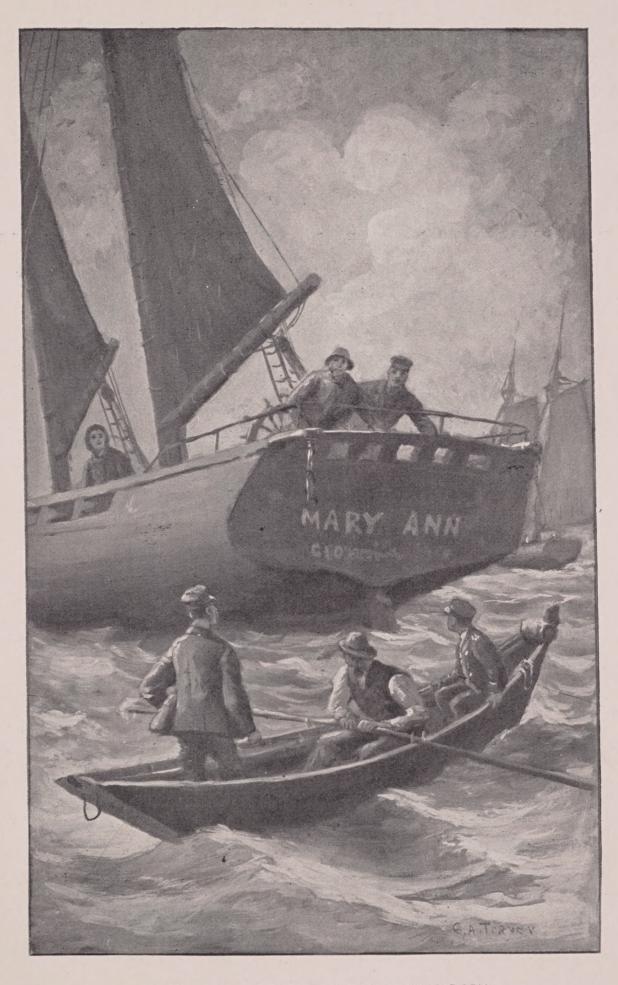
fortably, there was a certain uneasy movement among the men as if more than one was tempted to beg permission to accompany the skipper.

"I'd give a full half of all that's comin' to me when we strike Portland agin, if I could have Reuben's place in that 'ere dory," Tim heard Bob Ahearn say longingly, "an' I believe I'd give the balance if Cap'n Ben'd come aboard an' let me run the thing my way."

Then Reuben buckled down to the oars, Captain Ben seated himself leisurely and comfortably in the stern-sheets as if he had nothing in mind save a few hours of idle pleasure, and District Messenger One-one-four doubled himself up in the bow in a final effort to find a reasonably easy seat on the sharp flukes of the small anchor.

"We'll take them as lays to the west'ard first," Captain Ben said to the oarsman, "an' it stands us in hand to keep a sharp eye out for the trawlers, 'cause the chances are Bates will be at work by this time."

The dory was forced by the vigorous strokes of Reuben Hardy to climb this hill of water and descend that valley, always up and down, now walled in by the green seas, and again rising until one looked from a height upon the sea, until she rounded to under the stern of the nearest fisherman—a Gloucesterman.



CAPTAIN BEN IN SEARCH OF THE MISSING DORY



"Hello, Cap'n Ben! Gone into yachtin', have yer? You look nice an' trig for a man as weathers 'round Sable Island Bank as much as you do.

"How are you, Cap'n Silas! Say, I'm lookin' for a man by the name of Bates. Gave me the slip last night. Took one of my dories. Seen any stray fishermen 'round here?"

"Give you the slip, eh? What 're you shippin'? Anythin' that comes along?"

"I knew him to be a fisherman all right, but was n't so well up as to his ways. He got into a bit of temper, an' made up his mind to leave. I ain't allowin' he counted on stealin' the dory, 'cept that he had to have her in order to get away."

"Well, I ain't seen nor heard of him. Come aboard, won't yer?"

"Can't stop. I ain't in the habit of wastin' time like this; but it seems as though I ought'er considerin' that Bates was n't satisfied with takin' a dory, but must needs go to cuttin' the trawls."

"He did that, eh? The second-rate scoundrel! Shoot him if you run across him, an' I'll do the same. A man that 'll cut trawls ain't skursely fit to live!"

By this time the dory was dancing along out of hailing distance, heading for the next vessel in her course, and when she had come up under the stern a similar conversation was carried on. Thus the work was continued from one schooner to another; about the same questions asked, very nearly the same replies given, and similar criticisms upon a fisherman who would cut trawls to work his spite on a crew with whom he had shipped; but no one knew anything whatsoever regarding Jerry Bates.

"We've taken the long end first, it seems to me, an' now we'll go to the east'ard. Let me spell you with the oars, Reuben," and Captain Ben made as if he would change seats, but settled back again as Hardy said:

"I'll stay where I am, if it's all the same to you. When we're 'round here among these Gloucestermen that think they're such dandies in the fishin' business, I kind er like to have my skipper in the stern-sheets instead of breakin' his back over the oars. It looks better, don't you think?"

"I reckon we don't have to give odds to Gloucestermen, leastwise we never have, Reuben, an' I've seen the time when if we from Portland wanted to set ourselves up as the only things on earth, we had more to do it with than some of them as puts out from Gloucester. Perhaps we won't carry sail till we jump the spars out of our vessels, but I'm allowin' that when it comes to figurin' up the profits of a cruise we can show two dollars for their one, 'cordin' to the number of men."

Tim never before heard Captain Ben speak as if he made any distinction between Gloucester fishermen and his own mates, but now he understood that way down in the skipper's heart was a pride for the fleet sailing from his own port.

"Well, Tim, I reckon by this you've seen what the fellows from Eastern Point call their crack schooners," the captain said after a long time of silence, during which Reuben Hardy rowed doggedly but vigorously. "They make the *Hylow* look a good deal like a tub, when you come to see the two together."

"Indeed they don't!" Tim cried emphatically. "I've not seen as pretty a vessel as the *Hylow* yet, an' I don't know why you should think so."

"Perhaps I don't, One-one-four; but we fishermen from Portland are always hearin' about how Gloucestermen can ride over us, till it's no more'n natural we should think we was the scum of the earth as compared with 'em; but when the Hylow's got fish enough aboard to put her in good trim, we'll show some of these crack Gloucester drivers whether they can sail 'round us or not! I don't make a business of racin'; as a matter of fact I claim a skipper has got no right to take the chances on the lives of his men by drivin' a craft under three or four feet of water for the sake of bein' able to say he got into port an

hour earlier by so doin'. I know it pays if you've got a fare of fresh fish an' want to catch the top of the market. Then there's reason for drivin', an' if you carry away a balloon or two, or even a topmast, you've got some excuse, 'cause the price of fish is bound to jump mighty quick, an' the difference of a few hours counts a good many hundred dollars more or less."

Then Captain Ben, having relieved his mind, if indeed it was relieved, as to the wisdom of earning a reputation for driving a vessel to the danger point, relapsed into silence. Reuben rowed steadily, the chug of his oars in the thole-pins alone breaking the silence, and Tim, despairing of finding a seat on the fluke of the anchor, faced about until he was looking directly over the stem of the dory upon what was to him the same wonderful scene as when he first viewed it.

The searchers for Jerry Bates passed the Hylow some distance away, but One-one-four could make out a tiny figure forward who seemed to be doing nothing except gazing seaward, and understood that Abram Doak, too much excited to be able to attend to his duties in the galley, was watching anxiously, hoping it might be possible for him to get some idea of what was going on when the search came to an end.

Beginning with the schooner which lay nearest on

the eastward side of the Hylow, the tour of this portion of the fleet was made in much the same manner as had been the other, and with similar results. Every fisherman in view had been asked concerning Jerry Bates, and each had replied, with apparent truthfulness, that he knew nothing whatever concerning him.

"What do you make of it, Cap'n?" Reuben asked when word was given to pull the dory around. "It don't stand to reason he could have got so very far away, seein's how he stopped to cut the trawls, an' even if he tried to, where did he go?"

"That's what's puzzlin' me, Reuben," Captain Ben said in perplexity. "I can't believe any of the men we have seen would lie to us for such a scurvy rascal as Bates. Yet he must be here in this fleet. He's not got nerve to put off, without a sail, for Halifax or St. Pierre, an' there're no ports nearer than those."

"We have n't had a look at all the dories yet; but it strikes me we've seen the most of 'em. Besides, what could he gain by loafin' 'round as if he was at work. I've kept my eye out for a boat with only one man in it, but I have n't seen any so far. You don't suppose there 's a chance he went to the bottom while foolin' with the trawls, eh?"

"Not in weather like this, Reuben. Bates is too

good a sailor to have an accident like that happen to him. He must be here, an' I'll find him out if we don't take another fish. It's too late to do anythin' more now. The sun'll be settin' in less than an hour, an' even though we have n't had a great catch to-day, there's considerable dressing down to be done 'twixt now an' mornin'. We'll sleep over it, Reuben. We'll sleep over it."

"If so be you was willin', Cap'n Ben, I'd take one man—say Bob Ahearn—to-morrow mornin', an' overhaul every blessed dory on this 'ere bank."

"We'll sleep over it, Reuben, we'll sleep over it," and more than that Captain Ben would not say until they were aboard the *Hylow* again, when he asked sharply:

"Any trawls been set since we left?"

"We got out two skates, an' will have a couple more down 'twixt now an' dark," Joe Barker replied.

"You an' Ahearn can set 'em, an' the rest of us 'll dress down. Get somethin' to eat, an' then we 'll be at it."

"What about Bates?"

Captain Ben went into the cabin as if he had not heard the question, and immediately he was below, Reuben and Tim were overwhelmed with questions concerning the result of their visit; but, as is known,

they could give no information concerning the man all were eager to find.

One-one-four hurried below as soon as it was possible to release himself from the grasp of those who were eager to ply him with questions, Abram Doak following close at his heels.

"What did you see?" Seth asked eagerly when Tim entered the cuddy.

"A whole slat of vessels, but there was n't one of 'em I'd swap for the *Hylow*, though Cap'n Ben said we had seen the pick of the Gloucester fleet."

"Never mind the Gloucester fleet," Abram cried impatiently. "What do we want with them when you know we're achin' to hear about that villain."

"I can't tell you anythin' about him," Tim replied.

"Everybody we come across swore he had n't been seen, an' that 's all there is to it."

"But he is here!" Abram screamed. "You dare to stand up there an' tell me he could get off this bank 'twixt the time he sneaked away an' now?"

"I ain't tellin' you anythin' about it, 'cause I don't know. We could n't find him, an' we asked the folks on board every vessel."

"Somebody's hidin' him, that's what's the matter. I ain't so thick-headed as to have it shoved down my throat that a man with only a pair of oars, an' no sail, could stop to cut trawls, an' get clean away since somewhere about midnight. Is the cap'n goin' to search for him?"

"He says he 'll sleep over it."

"Yes," Abram screamed, "he 'll sleep over it, will he? What's that but givin' Bates all the more chance to cut his stick? If I'd gone out lookin' for the villain there would n't be any need of sleepin' over it, 'cause I'd have him by this time."

Tim understood that it was no use to make any attempt to argue with the angry cook, who was not in condition to listen to reason because of his temper, and he turned all his attention to making an interesting story of the excursion for the invalid's benefit.

When the first half came to supper, with the captain among them, nothing was said regarding the failure of the search. Because the master of the Hylow remained silent on the subject, it was understood that he was not in a very pleasant frame of mind, and to criticise the failure might provoke harsher words than would be pleasant.

After the first half had finished the meal, however, none save Captain Ben went on deck; therefore it was that all the crew remained together while the second half was eating, and a noisy time they had of it. Every man seemed to consider it his duty to explain that the search had not been conducted properly,

and never one of them failed to heap reproaches upon Reuben Hardy's head.

That much-abused fisherman bore it meekly for a time, and then, as if believing the moment had come when silence was no longer golden, he burst forth:

"A bloomin' sharp set you are! I reckon there ain't one among you, includin' One-one-four, who could n't have swung out here anywhere an' picked up Bates whenever he felt like it! You're a fine set to jump on to me! What did I have to do with it? I pulled the dory from one craft to another while the cap'n asked questions. There was n't a skipper that did n't speak fair, an' all of 'em was chafin' under the collar when we told about his havin' cut trawls. You may think there's a Gloucesterman mean enough to hide him after what he 's done, but I don't."

"Then where is he?" Joe Barker screamed, and Reuben literally danced with rage as he replied:

"Where is he, you bloomin' idjut! How do you suppose I know? I broke my back pullin' 'round the whole fleet for nothin', an' do you reckon I'd done that if I knew where he was? If you chumps'd have more sense an' less gift of gab, we might hit on some head to this 'ere business. I told Cap'n Ben if he'd let Bob Ahearn go with me in the mornin', we'd pull 'round to every dory an' make certain he was n't in any of 'em."

"What did the skipper say?" Bob Ahearn cried excitedly.

"What did he say? He said, 'We'll sleep over it, we'll sleep over it,' an' that's all I could get out of him. Now if any of you smarties think you can do more, why get about it, an' leave me in peace. I'm worked up as bad as you are, an' don't like any man to tell me that I can pull at a pair of oars all the afternoon an' not be able to tell a codfish from a mackerel!"

"Will you go out an' hunt for him, Bob?" Abram asked anxiously.

"Will I?" Ahearn cried. "Let Cap'n Ben give me the chance! I'm willin' to go alone for that matter. We know plenty well that he 's here somewhere; but what we don't know is that he won't be out cuttin' our trawls agin as soon as it's dark. I never had any fault to find with Cap'n Ben Willard before; but I've got it good an' plenty now, if he 's goin' to 'sleep over it' when that beast of a Bates is workin' mischief such as the meanest fisherman I ever knew would balk at."

CHAPTER XII.

TRAWL-CUTTING.

Owing to the destruction of the trawls, the crew of the *Hylow* were not forced to spend very many hours in dressing down on this particular night. There were no more than three thousand pounds of fish on board, when, but for the cutting of the trawls, there would have been at least twice as much, and the work of packing the small catch was not great.

There was not one among the crew who did not feel a sense of personal injury because the Hylow's portion of the harvest had been so small, when all the other vessels of the fleet had taken in enough to cover their decks flush with the rail. That they were able to turn in at an early hour was no balm for their wounded feelings; had it been necessary for them to dress down during the next twelve or fifteen hours, every man jack of them jumping to it the best he knew how, all hands would have been in high spirits. Now, however, they worked in silence, Captain Ben being the only one who made any attempt at carrying on a conversation, and even he speedily gave over such effort after learning that his crew were determined not to be beguiled into cheerfulness.

It was not yet ten o'clock in the evening when the last fish had been salted down. Then, instead of leaving the task of cleaning up for Tim to perform, all hands, even including the captain, set about putting things to rights; consequently the work was done in short order, and as the men paused to make certain everything was shipshape, Ezra Snow said questioningly:

"Reuben allows as how you're needin' to sleep over it before sayin' what shall be done towards tryin' to catch the scoundrel that cut the trawls?"

"That's what I said," Captain Ben replied, turning as if to go into the cabin. Then, seemingly thinking something in the way of an explanation was due his men, he added: "There's no need for us to rush matters, boys. We know Bates is here somewhere, an' while the fishin' holds good he can't get away. It's mighty easy for a man, by givin' free rein to his temper, to do that for which he'll always be sorry. The best way to keep clear of such a mess is to sleep over it."

"Is it in your mind, Cap'n, to let a man who is willin' to cut trawls, just for spite, go scot free?" Joe Barker asked, and Captain Ben understood that it was necessary for him to declare himself plainly, otherwise much dissatisfaction among the willing, hard-working crew might be brought about.

"I'll tell you how it is, lads. I want you to look at this matter like men, rather than children. Of course, you understand that I ain't in no way upholdin' Jerry Bates, an' I don't consider him fit to associate with decent men. His is a queer make-up, an' perhaps he ain't wholly responsible for it, not havin' tried to keep his temper in check when he was younger. To give him all that's comin' to him, we'll say that he didn't mean to work Seth any harm—that it was an accident caused by his flyin' into a rage—"

"What about his half drowndin' One-one-four?" "Of course that was his temper agin. While a man must be held responsible for what he does when he flies into a rage, we have to consider that he did n't have the right kind of trainin' when he was young. Now here in a nutshell is why I want to sleep over this thing before making any move: He is out of the Hylow; we're rid of him; he's got our dory, but that's only a matter of eighteen dollars. He has cut our trawls, but they would n't be mended, no matter what we might be able to do to him, an' I'm allowin' he'll give us a wide berth after this. Therefore I question if we are wise in spending time that could be used in fishin', just to gratify feelings which we should n't be proud of. Take my advice, lads; don't chew this thing over till you 're all worked up, but sleep over it, as I'm goin' to do, an' in the mornin' we'll say whether it's a payin' job for us to hunt up a man we're mighty glad to lose."

Having said this Captain Ben wheeled sharply about and went into the after-cabin, while the men hung in the wind, not well pleased to follow the skipper's advice, but yet almost ashamed to run contrary to it.

During a full minute no one spoke, and then Bob Ahearn said with a mirthless laugh:

"I don't reckon it would be injurin' Mr. Bates very much if we had a cup of coffee, an' whatever else in the way of a stomach-strengthener Abram may be willin' to deal out."

With this he went into the cuddy, followed by all the crew, and never a man of them joined Captain Ben in the after-cabin, which was good indication that they intended to so far disregard his advice as to "chew the matter over" before "sleeping on it."

"I reckon I'll take down this 'ere board far enough so 's you can see what is goin' on, for 'cordin' to all appearances there 's likely to be a lively session here," Abram said to Seth as the men began to come below.

"There's no need of wastin' time on me, Mr. Doak, 'cause it don't make any difference whether I can see out or not," the invalid replied.

"Bless your heart, it won't be wastin' time, 'cause

I 've got nothin' to do but sit 'round while the tongue-waggin' is goin' on, an' I 've the idee there'll be a good deal of it, considerin' as how some of this 'ere crew don't seem disposed to follow the skipper's advice."

Then the captain of the galley set to work pulling out the nails which held the extra berth-board in place, and lowering it until it was possible for the lad, by raising his head a trifle, to look over the top.

"I don't dare take it off entirely, seein' 's how the sea may come up at any time, an' it would n't do for you to be jumped out on the floor while that 'ere splintered leg seems to be gettin' on so well," Mr. Doak said when the task was finished, and then folding the lad's coat, he so arranged it as to increase the size of the pillow. "Now you've just the same as got a reserved seat to this 'ere show, an' I'm allowin' there 's goin' to be quite a time here in the way of chinnin' before the matter is settled."

In this supposition Mr. Doak was correct. The men were no sooner in the cuddy, each with a steaming mug of coffee, than they seemed to forget all Captain Ben had said, and, because every one wanted to talk at the same time, voices were raised until the din became almost deafening.

Ezra Snow was the man who appeared to be the

more deeply aggrieved because Captain Ben was disposed to let Jerry Bates go his way without punishment, and he claimed that it was a bad sign, especially on the first voyage of a new vessel, to lose anything by theft.

"It stands us in hand to get back the dory, even though we let the trawl-cuttin' go," he said in an oratorical tone, standing with his back against the companion-stairs so that all might see him. "I'll agree with Cap'n Ben that the price of the dory ain't enough to pay us for knockin' off work when the fish are strikin' in so sharp; but s'pose we don't? we let the thing drop as the skipper says, what's goin' to be the result of it? Why, we'll be losin' the clothes off our backs on the next trip, 'cordin' to all the signs, an' I never saw one like this fail. I was out in the old Mary an' Ella-first cruise she maderight off the ways. We put into Fortune Bay for bait, an' one of 'em thievin' Miquelon fishermen stole a tub full of trawls. Jim Beers was cap'n-he was one of them easy-goin' men, as you know. He says, says he, 'Who's goin' to chase all over Newfoundland for a lot of trawls? Let the Miquelon have 'em if he wants 'em, I 'm agreeable.' I begged of him on 'count of the sign not to drop the thing there, but keep on if we spent the whole season, rather 'n bring bad luck on the schooner; but no, he held out, an' we went to fishin'. Now what do you think happened? We run into St. John toward the last end of the season, an' I'll be blamed if we didn't lose a seine that was pretty nigh as good as new—well, it was worth five hundred dollars to any man among us—an' all 'cause we didn't put our hands on that Miquelon thief as we ought'er have done."

"Boil down your signs, Ezra. Who cares for 'em?" Joe Barker cried impatiently. "What I'm thinkin' of is that Jerry Bates is somewhere chucklin' to himself 'cause he's got the best of us."

"Yes; but where is he?" Mr. Doak asked as he wedged himself behind the stove in his favorite position. "He shipped on a good lay, an' it don't stand to reason he can get the same, no matter what craft he goes aboard of, down here on the Banks. He'll take what they're a mind to give him, which'll be the smallest end of it, of course, 'cordin' to my way of figurin'. He may have a little the best of us; he's bound to get the worst of it hisself."

"Are you holdin' to it that the cap'n is right in lettin' him alone?" Ezra cried angrily.

"I won't say 'Yes' to that, an' I don't know as I'll say 'No.' Takin' a sensible squint at it, the thing looks a good deal like bitin' off your nose to spite your face, when you knock off work, at a time like this to chase up somethin' you don't want, such as

Bates. I'll agree with the skipper, though, that it's better to sleep on it than go off half-cocked. What do you say, Bob?"

"I'm ready to sleep, seein's how we can't do anythin' else just now; but you can set it down as a fact I'll get my hands on that trawl-cuttin' villain before the season's over!"

Then Bob Ahearn, by way of showing he had no desire to continue what was a useless discussion, rolled into the nearest bunk, leaving Ezra to cite cases where direct misfortune had followed a fishing vessel because some of her crew had neglected a sign or an omen which might have been righted.

If Mr. Snow's shipmates had not been so thoroughly well acquainted with him and his yarns, they might have listened with somewhat of patience to the long-winded recitals; but, as it was, one by one tired of the superstitious tales, and went to their bunks in the after-cabin or in the cuddy until none was left to hear him, save Abram, who was nodding so sleepily that there seemed very great danger he might burn the end of his nose on the hot stovepipe.

"I've done all I can to bring things 'round right," Ezra exclaimed on discovering that his one auditor was not in a condition to hear what he said. "I s'pose I can stand it to buck agin plain signs the bal-

ance of this 'ere cruise; but you won't find me aboard the *Hylow* another season."

"Then it'll be 'cause Cap'n Ben don't want you," Abram replied, straightening himself up with a start which threatened to dislocate his spinal column. "Before this time next year you'll have it that when anythin' is stole from a new vessel it's a sign of big luck; but however you figure it out, I'm goin' to turn in while there's a chance, for after the skipper has idled away half a day you'll find he'll drive all hands mighty lively to make up for it."

Then the captain of the galley crept into his bunk, and how long Ezra Snow remained propped up against the companion-stairs, meditating upon signs and omens, Seth was unable to say, for he fell asleep before the superstitious fisherman had made any change of position.

It was not yet daylight the next morning when all hands were turned out by a summons from the deck, and while Abram was making ready breakfast the crew of the *Hylow* prepared for work, it being ideal fishing weather. Captain Ben ordered the men into the boats as soon as they had broken their fast, with never a word as to what conclusions he had arrived at after sleeping upon the question of Jerry Bates's punishment.

One-one-four had gone on deck to have a look

around as soon as he turned out, and he came back almost immediately in a state of great excitement.

"There's one crew short for the dories, 'cause Jerry Bates has left," he said hurriedly to Seth, "an' what do you s'pose? Cap'n Ben says there's no reason why I should n't go out with Ezra! If he can't have a mate of course he's bound to stay aboard, an' I'm gettin' the chance of my life now to find out whether I can ever be a fisherman!"

"Do you suppose you can do anythin' to help Mr. Snow?" Seth asked in surprise.

"He says I ought'er be able to run a trawl as well as anybody, after I kind er get my hand in. Of course it'll come hard on him, 'cause I won't be able to pull the boat much of any; but you can just bet I'll try my best! Say, you ain't goin' to get lonesome 'cause I've gone?"

"Of course I ain't, Timmy! I'm glad you've got such a good show. Be careful of yourself, won't you? It'd be terrible if you should fall overboard."

"I don't know how you make that out. I've had one try at it already, an' pulled through all right."

"But you might not the next time, an' it don't do to take any chances, 'cause you want to be sure to live long enough to tell your mother that you did n't really run away."

"I'll 'tend to that part of it, old man; but I'm

goin' to let her know how it happened before the Hylow gets back to Portland."

"How can you do that?" Seth asked in surprise.

"Bob Ahearn told me that you an' I ought'er write some letters so 's to send 'em by the first vessel that leaves here. That 's the way all the fishermen do, an' when I get back to-night I'm goin' to try my fist at it, though writin' ain't my strong hold. But say, I can't stay here talkin', 'cause it would n't do to keep Ezra waitin'. Now don't get lonesome, an' when I come back with a dory full of fish I'll bring the biggest one down here an' show it to you."

"Hold on there, One-one-four! Don't you dare go off without somethin' in your stomach!" Abram called sharply as Tim was bounding up the companion-way. "If you ever count on bein' a fisherman you've got to see to it that your insides are kept full."

"But I ain't hungry. I'm afraid Ezra'll be ready before I am."

"You are hungry, an' Ezra can wait, if so be he does what he never did before since I've known him, an' that's bein' among the first to leave a vessel in the mornin'. He's always behindhand, so you sit right down here an' fill up."

Mr. Doak made certain his command would be obeyed, for, seizing One-one-four by the coat-collar,

he literally lifted the lad on to the locker, placing in front of him a generous supply of food and coffee.

Tim was ready for his first lesson in trawl-running a good twenty minutes before his dory-mate had finished breakfast, and, as Mr. Doak had predicted, the superstitious fisherman was among the last to leave the schooner.

"Now, son, you want to be mighty careful at the start," Mr. Snow said as he halted at the rail before boarding his boat. "Remember this is your first try at fishin', an' things have got to be done so 's bad luck won't follow. Be sure to stick your right foot inter the dory first, an' as you value your life, pick up the left oar before you touch the other. I've seen lads full as promisin' as you are, who tumbled in any way first time of trawlin', without takin' heed how they touched the oars, an' what happened? Why I never see one of 'em that came out worth a cent. I've in mind a lad from Harpswell; we was on the Georges, an' mind you he knew what a trawl was all right, on 'count of bein' brought up in a fishin' place; but he 'd never been out to run one. I allowed he might go with me for a try, so what'd the idjut do but jump with both feet at once right inter the boat, an' pick up the right-hand oar. Now if that ain't flyin' in the face of Providence I don't know what is! What was the result? Why he did n't stay on the Banks

but one season, an' now he 's ashore, tendin' store, or some such thing as that, when he might have been a first-class fisherman. I do hate to see boys go to the bad; but in a case like that you could n't do anythin' to prevent it."

Tim, eager as he was to do a man's full duty aboard the *Hylow*, observed carefully Mr. Snow's instructions, and the two started away from the schooner with all the signs in their favor.

"You're doin' pretty well, One-one-four, for a beginnin', an' now see to it you hold out! There 're some aboard the Hylow as laugh at Ezra Snow 'cause he puts his faith in signs, but I tell you it don't do any harm an' I've seen the time when it did a power of good. Last season we was goin' down by Matinicus, an' I was below with Bob Ahearn, Joe Barker, an' two or three others of the boys, when we heard somebody sing out, 'There's the new moon!' Now you see all of us knew she was there, an' when it come our time to go on deck Bob an' Joe did n't pay any attention to the moon, any more 'n if there had n't been one. Out they went, shoulder to shoulder, lookin' behind an' every way, an' it stands to reason it'd be jest their luck to see her for the first time over their left shoulders. I ain't built that way. I backed up out of the cuddy so 's to make certain she 'd come over my right shoulder. Well, what happened?

Bob an' Joe were dory-mates same as they are now, an' if you'll believe me, the second time they went out to run trawls the wind came up all of a sudden a livin' gale, with them loaded gunwale-deep, for the fish was takin' on mighty fast. They had to throw over pretty nigh half of 'em, else they'd never have got back to the schooner, an' yet Bob'll laugh at me 'cause I put faith in signs!"

"Well, things are all right this mornin', Mr. Snow, so we ought'er have good luck."

"Yes, that's what I'm countin' on," Ezra said in a tone of content as he pulled leisurely at the oars. "It'd have pleased me a little better if you could have been ready to start earlier, 'cause then we might have taken the nearest trawls. Now we'll have to work our way down to the east'ard here, an' spend half an hour or more rowin' when we might have been takin' fish same as you pick blueberries out on the Cape."

"But I was ready before you, Mr. Snow," Tim replied mildly.

"Was you? Why didn't you show up where I could see you? I hunted all 'round the cuddy without findin' hide or hair of you; that's what kept me behind."

As a dory-mate who would do considerably more than his share of carrying on the conversation, Ezra Snow was a success. He talked faster than he rowed, spinning yarns of his wonderful success as a fisherman, and deviating now and then from the course of his story to point a moral by explaining that this piece of ill fortune would never have come about if some one had not run contrary to the omen in such cases, or explaining exactly how, from his point of view, a man might control the future if he was exceedingly careful.

He was yet engaged in giving his dory-mate a detailed account of a remarkably prosperous voyage which he had made after successfully guarding against a black cat who would have crossed his path at an unlucky angle, when they saw one of the trawlbuoys for which they had come in search, and an instant later Mr. Snow had food for other thought than that of omens.

"Well, I'll be totally jiggered!" he exclaimed, dropping the oar to point out the buoy, which was sailing merrily along on the crest of a wave.

"What's the matter?" Tim cried in surprise.

"Ain't you goin' to pick it up?"

"Pick it up, lad? Can't you see she's been cut adrift? That miserable Jerry Bates is still hangin' round here somewhere, workin' everlastin' mischief! Here's another trawl cut, an' I s'pose Cap'n Ben'll think it's his boundin' duty to sleep over it before we

can raise a hand toward stoppin' that villain's work."

It was as Mr. Snow had said. The easternmost trawl had been cut deliberately, as was seen when the buoy had been brought in-board, and it was reasonable to believe Jerry Bates had worked the mischief, for, fortunately, trawl-cutting was a crime which the average fisherman abhorred as something even worse than chicken-stealing.

"What are we goin' to do?" Tim asked helplessly.

"I reckon there's nothin' for it but to put back to the next one, an' we'll find that in the same shape, or I'm mistaken. Instead of gettin' a lesson in runnin' trawls this mornin' you'll have a chance to bear a hand at makin' some, if we're to keep on supplyin' 'em for that miserable villain to destroy! We'll carry the buoy back so's to show it, an' see if there's any others 'round here in the same shape."

Before the two returned to the *Hylow* they found one more set of buoys adrift, and Mr. Snow's wrath was overpowering.

"Benjamin Willard can keep on sleepin' from now till Doomsday, if that's to his mind; but he won't do any more fishin' till we've routed out that Jerry Bates, you mark my word on that!"

As a matter of course, One-one-four was deeply disappointed because he was thus deprived of an op-

portunity to try his hand at trawl-running, and thus was he in a frame of mind to realize more fully than he ever had done how despicable was such form of mischief.

Ezra did not return immediately to the schooner. He was a mile or more away from the dory in which were Captain Ben and Reuben Hardy, and toward her he pulled vigorously, eager to give information of this last outrage.

"We're lookin' after the trawls here!" Captain Ben shouted when Ezra had come within hailing distance, and the latter cried angrily:

"Well, it's mighty lucky for you there's any to look after! What with your sleepin' over things, an' givin' that heathen a fair chance to cut more of his monkey-shines, you'll have to put into port for a new outfit."

"What's gone wrong, Ezra?"

"What do you s'pose? Why do you reckon I'm pullin' over here when it was my business to get further to the east'ard, seein's how I was a little slow in gettin' away? Think I'm rowin' a dory for my health?"

"Out with it, man," Captain Ben said sharply, as he ceased his labor for a moment.

"Well, the trouble is there's no trawls to the east'ard to be run, seein's how Jerry Bates has done

the work for us same as he did before. Here's the buoys, if so be you want to figger out whether they've been cut or not. Now I'm tellin' you, Cap'n, though I s'pose it's my business to wait till you speak first, that if somethin' ain't done mighty soon this 'ere cruise is the same as a dead failure."

As he spoke, Mr. Snow tossed one of the buoys into Captain Ben's boat, and the skipper of the Hylow sat silently gazing at it until Ezra lost the small remnant of temper which he had managed thus far to retain.

"Well," he cried, "goin' to sleep over it agin? If there was a little more humpin' an' not quite so much sleepin', I'm thinkin' we could manage to take a fish now an' then; but as it is we've got to turn all our attention to riggin' trawls for Jerry Bates to cut."

"It's evident you'll have to get about that work now, or else lay idle," the captain said as if suddenly coming to a realization of the situation. "Pull back, an' set about it. There's no use cryin' over spilled milk."

"Neither is there any use to keep tippin' the pitcher up so the milk'll be spilled," Ezra retorted as he swung the dory around, and better proof that he was sorely disturbed in mind could not have been had, than by his remaining absolutely silent until the dory was alongside the *Hylow* once more.

Bob Ahearn and Joe Barker had just come in with a full load of fish a few seconds before Ezra and Tim arrived, and as the dory came alongside empty Bob cried with a laugh:

"What's the matter, Ezra? Signs gone wrong, an' you had to put back?"

"I'm tired of hearin' so much about signs! It's time you fellows dropped that, an' begun to realize what's goin' on 'round you."

"Tired of signs, Ezra?" Joe cried. "I don't believe anythin' like that could happen so long as you stay on top of water. Ain't fish takin' hold down to the east'ard?"

"Somethin' besides fish is takin' hold down there," Ezra replied as he tossed the second buoy aboard Bob's dory, and no further explanation was necessary.

"So he's still at it, eh?" Ahearn exclaimed without checking the silver stream of fish he was throwing aboard. "He's still at it, an' we're goin' to hang 'round here gettin' half a fare every day while the rest of the fleet are takin' 'em hand over hand, just 'cause Cap'n Ben don't want to make trouble for a cur like Jerry Bates! It's time we looked about for another berth, if we 're countin' on makin' a dollar this season. I wonder what the skipper 'll say when he hears this?"

"I showed a buoy to him as we was comin' along, an' instead of goin' inter the air like an honest man ought'er, he jest set moonin' with the end of the line between his fingers, till I up an' give him a good bit of my mind, even though he is the skipper, for my patience is clean worn out!"

"Where is he?" Bob asked sharply.

"Over yonder; second boat to the nor'ard from here."

"Ezra, you an' Tim unload this dory. Joe an' I'll take yours, for it'll save time."

"Time for what?" Mr. Snow asked impatiently.

"Time that's goin' to be spent at somethin' besides fishin', till this business is brought to an end!" Bob cried as if it was only with difficulty he could restrain his anger. "Last night I offered to go out an' hunt up Bates. Now I'm countin' on askin' the skipper to let me go, an' if he wants to sleep over it agin, why——"

"Well, what'll you do, Bob?"

"I ain't sayin' jest now; but the chances are there'll be another spare berth aboard the *Hylow*, 'cause I don't count on spendin' my time makin' trawls for the sake of havin' 'em cut."

"Do you s'pose there 's any chance some of them St. Pierre Frenchmen could be doin' this thing?" Joe asked as he leaped out of the dory that Mr. Snow and Tim might come aboard.

"Of course there ain't!" Bob replied savagely.

"I've no likin' for that St. Pierre crowd, but at the same time I'll give 'em credit for not bein' willin' to do such a trick as that."

"Then why was it the cap'n could n't find Bates when he visited every vessel in the fleet?"

"That's a question I can answer better to-night,"
Bob replied as he jumped into the dory which Ezra
and Tim had just left. "Get aboard here, Joe;
I'm not minded to loaf 'round a great while, for we
may have quite a job ahead of us, an' you can count
that we're not comin' back till it's finished."

"Hold on for a bite of somethin'," Abram cried as he showed his head above the cuddy-companion. "You don't want to be pullin' 'round this 'ere fleet on an empty stomach!"

"Chuck somethin' aboard then, for we can't fool 'round at table. I'm out for Jerry Bates, an' when we get back you'll know somethin' more'n you do now."

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CHAPTER XIII.

A MYSTERY.

Mr. Snow had nothing to say during such time as he and Tim were engaged in unloading Bob's dory. The fact that Jerry Bates, after a lapse of twenty-four hours, was still able and willing to do mischief to those who had never harmed him, was something in the way of vindictiveness which staggered the superstitious fisherman.

As a matter of course, he had known during his life cases where fishing gear had been destroyed maliciously, but, fortunately, these were few in number; no more than four times had he even heard of such an outrage, for there were not many men willing thus to outlaw themselves. Among the fishing fleet no crime, save that of actual murder, is considered as heinous, and there was probably not a man then on Sable Island Bank who failed to remember the punishment dealt out to that Nadeau of St. Pierre, two or three years before. This case was fresh in Ezra's mind when he said to Tim, as the last fish was thrown aboard the Hylow:

"I'm allowin' if Cap'n Ben'll keep his hands off we'll give Bates more'n Nadeau got, tough as it was. Even then he won't be gettin' all he deserves."

"What was that?" Tim asked curiously.

"Why I allowed you'd know all about it, 'specially if you've hung 'round the docks in Portland any, for it was common talk there nigh on to a whole season. This Nadeau-I'm thinkin' Tony's his other name—was about the most worthless specimen of a Frenchman you ever saw. He'd ship with any skipper that was fool enough to take him; smuggle rum in his dunnage when he came aboard, an' just as true as they struck fish in good shape, Nadeau'd get hisself an' two or three others of the crew bloomin' drunk so's they could n't raise a hand. He made sich a name among the French fleet that nobody'd have him, so he went up to the States an' shipped with Levi Turner of Orr's Island-you remember him. He sailed the Pride of Casco till the old hulk went to pieces, an' now he's got the Northern Light. Well, Cap'n Turner shipped Nadeau one season, an' got it played on him just as I tell you. So next year who should turn up as smilin' as a new ten-cent piece but this same Frenchman, allowin' he was goin' to have a berth aboard the Pride of Casco. Cap'n Turner says he ain't takin' any more chances with drunken men. Of course Frenchy, he allowed he'd

never drink a drop stronger 'n water if it choked him to death, so finally Levi gives in, an' lo an' behold, first school they strike—they was out mackerelin', you know; the *Pride of Casco* did n't do much else, 'cept halibutin' in the winter—they struck a big school, an' if you'll believe it Nadeau carried a bottle of liquor with him when they went out with the seine. Bless my soul, but that man did cut up wild before the nets were hauled! Cap'n Turner, jest as soon as he got the fish aboard, put for the nearest land—did n't wait to find a port—an' sets him ashore."

"Do you mean he put him right out where there was n't any houses?" Tim asked.

"Well, it was on Matinicus, an' there ain't no great show of a town there, you know. So he dumped him; well an' good for that part of it. Next season the Pride of Casco was down off the Georges trawlin', while this Nadeau was in a Newfoundland schooner—I've forgot her name—fishin' close alongside, an' every chance he got he cut Cap'n Turner's trawls. It was quite a spell before anybody come to find out who was doin' the mischief; but finally they got him well to rights, an' then the whole fleet knocked off long enough to have a trial. What do you 'spose they did with him? They lashed his shoulders to a keg-buoy; hung a couple of pieces of pig-iron to

his feet, so 's he 'd ride on an even keel, an' anchored him out for twenty-four hours in thirty fathoms of water. That 's the way Jerry Bates ought'er be served, though I ain't sure but that it would be the proper caper to lash his feet to the cask, an' put the pig-iron on his shoulders so 's to let him ride keel uppermost——"

Tim had scrambled over the rail even before Mr. Snow finished his story. He was eager to be on board the schooner where it would be possible to note the movements of Bob Ahearn's dory, for there was a question in his mind as to whether Captain Ben would allow the two men to spend their time hunting for the mischief-maker.

He had no difficulty in distinguishing the boat he sought, for all the other dories in the vicinity were intent upon fishing. Only this single one was being pulled straight away from the *Hylow*.

While the lad stood there watching intently, Abram Doak came up out of the cuddy to ask, with impatient curiosity, what he was doing.

"There'll be considerable trouble aboard this 'ere schooner if Cap'n Ben makes any objection to lettin' Bob do as he wants," Abram said when Tim had explained the matter, and then he also took part in watching, quite as eager as Tim to learn what the result would be.

Twenty minutes later Bob and Joe could be seen ranging alongside of the skipper's dory, and Abram said excitedly:

"Now I reckon Ahearn is givin' it to the cap'n pretty hot, for he's got a good tongue of his own, has Bob, with mighty warm Irish blood behind it. As good a fellow as you want to meet till he's crossed, an' then stand from under! Things won't be pleasant hereabouts if the skipper tries to prevent him from doin' what he's after. There! the tonguewaggin' is finished, an' now you can tell how it's turned out, by the course they set! I declare for it, Cap'n Ben's given in without sleepin' over it agin. Bob's pullin' straight away for the fleet of dories up to the nor'ard. When he gets back I reckon we'll know considerable more about Jerry Bates than we do now."

It was evident Ahearn had gained the desired permission, unless indeed he had set off against the captain's will. At all events, it was certain Bob and Joe were scrutinizing closely the occupants of every boat in the fleet, and there seemed little chance but that the trawl-cutter would soon be brought to such justice as the crew of the *Hylow* decided to mete out.

Ezra had set about making a new trawl, and called Abram to assist him in the task. There was nothing Tim could do on deck, and therefore he went below

to explain, for the invalid's benefit, why his first lesson as a fisherman had been cut so short.

This done, and Seth's curiosity gratified, One-one-four suddenly bethought himself of the letter he intended to write to his mother, therefore decided that this was an opportune time in which to get about the work. Even though it was not probable any of the fleet would be homeward bound immediately, it stood him in hand to have the missive ready, and, besides, he might not find as much spare time on his hands again for many a long day.

Mr. Doak willingly left his work of trawl-making to supply the lad with paper and pencil, and during the next hour One-one-four worked exceedingly hard, for letter-writing was not, as he explained to Seth, his "strong hold."

When finally the task was completed, he surveyed the result with pride not unmixed with considerable shame, for the penmanship might have been improved upon decidedly, and the spelling of many words was not at all in accordance with the generally recognized authorities.

"Now you see how it sounds, Seth," he said with a long-drawn sigh of relief as he leaned back against the locker, the letter in his hand. "I want to make sure mother'll understand just how it happened. I ain't way up on this kind of business, an' that's a

fact. I begin to think perhaps it would have been better for me if I'd 'tended out on school a little longer, 'cause some of these words don't look right; but she'll know what they mean. All I want is to have enough of 'em, so 's she'll see I could n't help runnin' away."

Then Tim read the following:

"dear mother Me an' Seth are down here nere sable iland in the hilow but we didnt run away. i mean seth did but i didnt cause they put on the hach wile we was in the hold i couldnt get out so of corse I had to come fishin. We are havin a teryble good time but i keep on bein fraid youll think I run away after i told you i wouldnt cause I didnt you see when the hach was fasend down how could i get out to go ashore. so seth broke his leg & captin Ben fixed it together the best way he coud but we dont no how the jobll turn out. The dory tipped over wile Mister doak was rowin wich made Bob mad an he says the cooks a lubber so you see I didnt count on runnin away but had to go cause they put on the hach so quick. Im learnin to be a fisherman & will have the job pretty nere down by the time i get home agin so youll see i coudnt help runnin away from your affecsionite son timothy p. Jones."

"Seems's if that told the whole story, don't it?"
Tim asked anxiously when he had finished reading,

and Seth replied with just a shade of doubt in his tones:

"I should think she ought to know that you had to go with me; but did n't you get it kind er mixed up 'bout my broken leg, an' us bein' thrown out of the dory?"

"I don't see why you should think that. It's just as plain as it can be. Now listen," and Tim read once more the lines referring to the accident. "She'll be blind if she don't know what it means."

"Yes, I s'pose it 's all right, Timmy, an' now I 'm wonderin' whether we could n't get Mr. Snow or Bob Ahearn to write to Uncle Joshua an' mother for me?"

"Could n't I do it?"

"Well, you see they'd know more about where we was goin' to land, an' all that kind of thing, than you would."

"Oh, you think they'd make a better fist at it, eh?" One-one-four asked, sharply.

"I ain't sayin' quite that, Timmy; but you see your mother understands what you write, 'cause she knows you; but my Uncle Joshua might get mixed up on it. Perhaps Mr. Doak would be willin'."

"I'll ask him now," Tim said quickly, recovering from the irritation which had assailed him with the suspicion that Seth did not believe he had succeeded very well in explaining the situation to his mother. "He'll do it jest as soon as he gets through helpin' Mr. Snow," One-one-four announced after a brief absence from the cuddy. "He's got some postage stamps, so's whichever vessel takes the letters can put 'em in the post-office at whatever port they make. I'll be parin' some potatoes, an' kind er gettin' things ready for dinner, so he'll have plenty of time to 'tend to you."

Now that Tim had written his mother with such a wealth of detail as to how he chanced to be aboard the *Hylow*, Seth was feverishly eager to have similar information sent those he loved, and awaited with no slight impatience until, after what seemed a very long time, during which One-one-four had pared a huge pail of potatoes, Mr. Doak entered the cuddy.

"Now then, lads, it's a letter you want, eh?" the cook said with an air of business as he rolled his shirt-sleeves yet a trifle higher, took off his vest, and otherwise prepared for the arduous task before him. "I don't write so terrible much when I'm aboard ship, but ashore I count myself a pretty neat hand at it. First an' foremost who 're we goin' to write to?"

"To my mother—she's in Liverpool; an' to Uncle Joshua—he's, well, I don't know where."

"Then in the name of goodness how're you goin' to write him? A man's got to be somewhere, else he can't get a letter, an' if he ain't nowhere, what's

the use of sendin' him one? You ought'er have figgered that out, Seth, before I came below."

"How would it do to tell your mother where you are, an' how you got here, an' ask her to write to your Uncle Joshua? She could tell him where to send you a letter, don't you see?" One-one-four suggested with an air of wisdom.

"Yes, but how do I know where she ought'er send me a letter?" Seth asked in perplexity. "We could n't get one down here."

"I'll tell you how to fix it!" Abram cried with the air of one who has solved a vexed problem. "She'll send the letter to me, an' I can give it to you when we get inter port."

"Well, do it up any way, Mr. Doak, so's she'll know I'm all right, an' ask her to tell you to tell me where Uncle Joshua lives, so's I can tell the steamship folks."

"That seems to be kind'er mixed up; but I'll do my best, son," Abram replied, and then clearing the table of every dish in order that he might have plenty of room to "spread himself," as he expressed it, he set about the task. There were times, before the missive was finished, when Tim firmly believed the cook was absolutely lying down on the paper, such a large portion of the table did he occupy.

"There!" he exclaimed as he made a flourish at

the end of the page, sending tiny drops of ink flying across the cuddy directly on Seth's face. "I reckon that 'll do the business good an' brown, an' when we get inter port you'll jest the same as have your finger on Uncle Josh. Now listen:

"'Kind an' respected madam i take my pen in hand to inform you that your son's broken leg is as well as could be xpected seein' 's how capin Ben aint what you might call a reglar doctor. Hes eatin hearty, takes three square meals a day an now an then somethin between whiles. He wants me to xplain all this to you sos you can let him know where his uncle Josh is. if youll kindly write to me at the followin address Ill tell your honored son whatever you may be pleased to impart to me. Seein's how we may not be back for quite a spell, an as he don't rightly know how he can dodge the officers when he lands I should advise you to write to me instead of to him. Hopin this will find you as it leaves me, an with all the compliments of the season I remain

"'Your respected friend,

"'ABRAM DOAK,

"'Care of Mrs. Bagley.'"

Abram leaned back on the locker, tapping the end of the pencil on his teeth, as he waited for the words of praise he expected to hear.

"Well, what do you think of it?" he asked impatiently, as no one spoke.

"Of course that must be all right," Seth replied doubtfully.

"All right? Why, of course it is! What more could you ask for? You don't reckon that with dinner close at hand I'm goin' to sit down here an' write a reg'lar book, do you? I've given her what you might call the bare facts, an' she can get the little quirks later, when you're well enough to write."

"Say," One-one-four asked, "who is Mrs. Bagley?"

"Why, that's the woman who keeps the house where I board."

"An' where does she live?"

"Jest 'round the corner from the Gaff Tops'l saloon."

"Oh, is that the place?" Tim said half to himself, and then to Abram he added, "Well, why don't you put that down, so's she'll know where it is?"

"That's a good idee, lad. I come near forgettin' it."

At the bottom of the sheet, some distance from the signature with its inky flourish, Mr. Doak added the words Tim suggested; but neither he nor the lads realized that when Mrs. Garland received the letter she would not have any means of knowing in what country or town Mrs. Bagley resided, and that, therefore, it might be difficult for her to reply.

"It ain't nowise handy to write letters on shipboard, leastways, it don't come so to me; but I gen'lly manage to pull out of it all right," Mr. Doak said with an air of satisfaction as he enclosed the letters in envelopes, directed them according to instructions given by the boys, and affixed to each, after wetting it in his mouth for several minutes, a postage stamp. "You ought'er see Ezra write letters. You'd think he was one of these 'ere circus performers standin' on his head. I've seen him start a letter jest abaft this cuddy, layin' down on the deck, mind you, so's he could get a good grip, an' he'd be plumb agin the after-cabin before he'd finished the first page. He worked the length of the Mary Willard four times tryin' to explain what he wanted done with a dog that he'd bought from a man up in Baldwin an' forgot to send for before we left port. It was the most dissatisfied letter you ever saw, an' I'm sayin' right here, that I'd be ashamed if I could n't do a little thing like that as it should be done. Now then, we'll turn to on the dinner. When them bloomin' fishermen of ours come aboard, they'll be as empty as that 'ere coffee-pot was after Jerry Bates knocked it off the stove.

Then, before the captain of the galley was ready for them, the crews of the dories began to return, and as one or another came alongside with a full fare of fish, and saw Ezra at work, each man quite naturally inquired why he was thus engaged.

Of course the result of these questions was that within a short time all the people of the Hylow were aware of the latest mischief perpetrated, unquestionably by Jerry Bates, and so excited and angry did the men become that when Captain Ben, who was among the last to pull up, came alongside, it looked as if a mutiny was in progress.

"There's no use in tuggin' our hearts out here settin' trawls, if they're to be cut one after the other," Ezra Snow cried as the master of the schooner stepped over the rail, and he, sympathizing with the men although not inclined to spend his breath in scolding, said, quietly, addressing all on deck:

"There's no good reason for such a hullaballoo, cause it won't mend matters a little bit. Bob Ahearn an' Joe Barker have started out to find Bates, for there's little doubt but that he's the man who's workin' the mischief. I had hoped, bein' once away from us, he'd be glad to keep his distance; but since he don't seem so inclined, we'll take the law

into our own hands up to a certain point, for I know as well as you do that we can't afford to have things go on as they seem to be started."

"What do you mean by takin' the law up to a certain point, Cap'n?" Mr. Snow asked.

"Just this, Ezra: we'll make of Bates a prisoner, which we have no legal right to do, an' hold him where he can't work any more harm, although by so doin' we're runnin' contrary to the law."

"An' then what?" some one cried.

"Then we'll set him ashore at the first port."

"An' is that all?" Mr. Snow cried in a tone of displeasure. "He's broken up three or four days' fishin' for us, an' we'll take him ashore as you would a passenger, eh?"

"There'll be no brutality, of that you may be positive, Ezra, for I won't countenance it. I ain't blamin' you men for wantin' to square accounts with him; but at the same time you'll do as I've said. No one shall raise a hand against him. I can't believe he's in his right mind, for what does he expect to gain by cuttin' trawls? How does he hope to keep clear of us?"

"I don't know what he expects, nor don't care," Ezra cried angrily; "but so much I do know, that if I was the one who caught him he would n't come back to this schooner in very good shape!"

"An' what benefit would that be to you, Ezra Snow?"

"It'd do me a world of good, an' I'd come nearer actin' the part of a man than if I coddled him up a spell, an' then carried him ashore so's he should n't get his feet wet."

Captain Ben must have guessed that it was useless for him to make any attempt at arguing with his men while they were in such a mental condition, and perhaps he did not care to say very much then, even though it could have availed, for he understood full well how sore they were in mind. At a reasonable estimate the *Hylow* would have had on board at that moment not less than five thousand pounds more of fish than was then in the hold, which meant that the cruise would be prolonged so many days or hours beyond what might have been necessary but for Jerry Bates.

The men were so excited that no one had even thought of going into the cuddy, although Abram had announced more than once that he was ready for the first half, when Reuben Hardy cried as he straightened himself up from unloading the dory:

"Yonder comes Bob an' Joe! Can you make out whether they've got anybody else with 'em or not?"

In a twinkling all had gathered in the bow of the schooner, from whence the best view could be had of

the boat Reuben referred to, but, strain their eyes as they might, it was impossible to distinguish other than the two who were working the oars.

"They must have caught the villain!" Ezra cried, moving to and fro as if it was impossible, because of his excitement, to remain in one position. "Of course he'd be in the bottom of the dory, seein's how they would n't undertake to bring the sneak without makin' him fast. The question is whether we stand bound to let Cap'n Ben have his way when he says nothin' more's to be done than to set him ashore?"

"When them as ships for a fishin' cruise undertake to run agin the cap'n's orders the folks ashore calls it mutiny," Abram said with an air of exceeding wisdom, he having come out of the cuddy when the word was first passed that Bob and Joe had hove in sight. "I'm not allowin' Cap'n Ben'd go so far as to bring men inter court for a thing like that; but he'd make it mighty warm for 'em otherwise, an' it'd be a pity for this 'ere crew, what has sailed together the last six seasons without a word, so to speak, to get into a row with a white man like Cap'n Ben Willard on account of a dirty sneak same as Jerry Bates has turned out to be."

"I reckon you're right, Abram, I reckon you're right," Mr. Snow said thoughtfully. "I won't

raise my voice agin whatever the skipper says; but if manœuvrin' will do it, I'll be one of them as carries him ashore, an' then there may be a chance to square accounts."

There was no question in the mind of any one but that Bob and Joe were bringing back the man who had done so much mischief. Knowing he was somewhere among the fleet, and understanding that no honest captain would shelter him after the story of his misdeeds had been told, it seemed only necessary that a thorough search of the dories, as well as the vessels, should be made in order to capture the culprit.

Therefore it was that the men, in their eagerness to get a glimpse of the supposed prisoner, turned a deaf ear to the cook's summons, and stood forward watching eagerly and impatiently the oncoming boat.

Then, when it was within hail, and apparently unable to restrain his curiosity longer, Ezra lifted his voice:

"Ahoy! Where 'd you find him?"

There was no reply. The two men bent their backs doggedly, and in silence.

"Ahoy! Where'd you find him?"

No word came in answer, and Mr. Snow, beginning to grow uneasy in mind, said half to himself:

"What's got inter them lads? Do you allow

Cap'n Ben gave 'em orders 'bout how they should come alongside for fear we'd take charge of things?"

"They did n't find him," Reuben Hardy, who had gone into the after rigging, cried in a tone of bitterest disappointment. "There's nobody aboard the dory but Bob and Joe!"

"Did n't find him!" Ezra exclaimed in bewilderment. "What's the reason they could n't find him, I'd like to know? You can bet I would n't come back to this 'ere schooner without him!"

"That's what Bob Ahearn said last night," some one cried, and then the dory came alongside, its crew leaping over the rail as they made the painter fast, but speaking no word.

"What's the matter, Bob?" Ezra cried imploringly. "Why don't you say somethin'? Why did n't you fetch your man?"

"'Cause we could n't find him," Bob replied almost savagely. "We've held up every dory that's afloat, an' been alongside the last bloomin' vessel in the fleet."

"But he's here somewhere!"

"That's what I said last night," Bob added bitterly. "I believed I could go out an' put my hand on him; but Joe an' I've overhauled everythin' in sight, an' unless some of the skippers have lied to us, which ain't reasonable after we told what Bates had done, there's nothin' for it but to say he ain't here."

"Then how did he cut the trawls last night?"

"Perhaps it might have been somebody else," Abram suggested, and Ezra cried angrily:

"I won't believe it! There can't be another man so mean in a fleet of this size!"

"Well, all I can say is that it's a mystery," Bob said with a gesture of helplessness as he went toward the cuddy, and just then Captain Ben came from the after-cabin, as he asked in a tone of perplexity:

"Did n't you find him?"

"Neither hide nor hair, an' we made the search jest as I told you it should be done. If Jerry Bates is the man who cut our trawls last night, then I say agin it's a mystery, an' somethin' I don't want any dealin's with. Unless you're willin' to say there's a skipper 'round here who'll hide a man like that, I'm askin' you what's become of him?"

"I wish I could answer your question, Bob," and now Captain Ben looked more disturbed in mind than any member of his crew had ever seen him. "It's a puzzler, an' no mistake!"

The men began to move about uneasily, each looking furtively at his neighbor as if having in mind something he dared not say. No one seemed to give

any heed to the noonday meal; fishing was apparently forgotten, and it was evident to the captain of the *Hylow* that unless this seeming mystery could soon be cleared up Jerry Bates absent was like to work more mischief to the crew than ever Jerry Bates present could have done.

CHAPTER XIV.

SABLE ISLAND.

Realizing that something must be done, and at once, to prevent what promised to be a panic of fear because of the failure to find the mischief-maker, Captain Ben said sharply to the men, who were beginning to whisper among themselves with every sign of terror written on their faces:

"It strikes me I've got a crew of old women, rather than men who've knocked 'round these waters for the last half-dozen years. I'll admit it's aggravatin' to know there's at liberty a fellow who'll do us a mischief whenever he can; but how long since you lads have grown afraid of one man? Is Jerry Bates such a wonderful creature that he can upset the work of fishermen like you?"

"A dozen Jerry Bateses would n't do it if we could come at 'em!" Ezra cried. "It's 'cause we can't find the villain that's a-worryin' of us. I'm askin', as does my mates, where is he, if so be Bob an' Joe failed to hunt him out when they went through the entire fleet?" "Now you're showin' the superstitious side of your nature, Ezra Snow, an' the others are fools enough to listen to you!" Captain Ben cried angrily. "What is there to fear more'n when he was with us, 'cept that we can't keep an eye out on him?"

"It's the idee that he ain't to be come at, an' I'm askin', as are the rest, what kind of a man is it that can hide here on the open sea?"

"Now you're tryin' to make out that there's somethin' wondrously mysterious about it all—gettin' the ghost business into it just 'cause you've always kept your foolish head crammed with ridiculous idees. He's somewhere 'round here, that's certain, for he has n't changed his nature since he broke Seth's leg, an' he's on top of the water, too, as you ought to have sense enough to know. Now put it straight out of your mind that there's anythin' unnatural or ghostly in this 'ere business, an' keep about your work. We've come down here for fish, an' I'm givin' you my word that we'll stay till we get our full fare!"

"If it's a case of havin' the trawls we make durin' the day cut at night, then I'm sayin' we're like to hold on here quite a spell!" Ezra cried sharply.

"Yes, so we are, if you foolish men set down whinin' instead of keepin' on about your work.

There'll be no trawl-cuttin' to-night, that I'll guarantee."

"How can you prevent it more'n you did last night?" Ezra continued.

"By standin' watch; if so be one man volunteers to help me out on the job, I'll keep movin' 'round among the trawls from sunset to sunrise."

"Things have come to a pretty pass when we've got to stand guard over our own riggin'," Bob Ahearn muttered, and the captain replied:

"It's a good deal better than knockin' off work in order to whine like a crowd of girls, for by goin' at it, as I've said, we stand a chance of takin' aboard what we came for, otherwise it's a case of gettin' home with empty pockets, an' bein' called cowards on top of that. At all events, there's no trawls cut in the daytime, so get you below an' fill up. Then set to work like honest fishermen who are not afraid of their own shadows. Dinner ready, Abram?"

"Ay, ay, sir, been waitin' for the first half nigh on to an hour."

"Then we'll get to work with our jaws, an' give our tongues a breathin' spell," Captain Ben cried with a forced laugh, and led the way into the cuddy.

While partaking of the meal he continued to jeer at the superstitious fears which were apparently gaining ascendency over his crew, thereby shaming not a few of those who were with him at table; but the second half, who were gathered on deck well aft, and among whom was Ezra, drank their fill of the unnatural or ghostly, thanks to Mr. Snow's efforts in that line.

When the second half was summoned to the cuddy, those who had finished the meal set off to run their trawls, but before they left Captain Ben cried in a peremptory tone, such as he seldom used save in cases of emergency:

"I don't want any sogerin' aboard this schooner! Fill up as soon as you know how, an' get away. We're not like to have many days as good as this, an' can't afford to waste fine weather. Try to get along decently, even though there does seem to be an inclination to play the part of cowards. I'll answer for it that neither Jerry Bates, nor any other man, does a mischief this night."

"Ay, talk's cheap," Ezra said, after first making certain the captain had gone over the rail. "He can do a heap of promisin'; but I'm tellin' you, lads, that this thing's got so far along it can't be stopped by keepin' a dory movin' 'round among the trawls. There's somethin' more'n ordinary mischief in this 'ere business!"

The men were not disposed to continue the conversation in the blood-curdling fashion in which Ezra

would have carried it on, and, instead of replying, all hands set about obeying the captain's orders, moving about with such good will that very speedily every member of the crew, save the cook and Oneone-four, were out-board pursuing their work as if there was nothing mystifying to trouble them.

"I'm thinkin' the best thing Cap'n Ben can do will be to lay his course for Portland Head, an' start over agin," Mr. Doak said as he and Tim set about washing the dishes. "What with Bates's work, an' Ezra to keep the men stirred up, this 'ere cruise comes mighty nigh bein' a failure, an' I'm 'fraid things won't mend."

"Are you beginnin' to be scared of ghosts too?"
Seth asked with a laugh.

"Ghosts be hanged! I've got more sense than that; but I'll tell you, lads, it puzzles me mightily, this 'ere thing about Bates. As I said before, it don't stand to reason that there's a skipper in this 'ere fleet, not even a Frenchman from St. Pierre, who would hide a trawl-cutter away from us, an' yet, where is he?"

"Now what's the use of askin' that question?" One-one-four cried almost irritably. "I've heard it more'n forty times! Why, of course he's 'round here somewhere, even though you do think there's nobody who'd hide him, else he could n't come out to

cut trawls. Say, are we goin' to loaf all the afternoon?"

"Now what do you mean?" Mr. Doak asked in surprise.

"What's the reason we could n't be dressin' down? It ain't likely I could make any great fist at it; but it'd help along jest so much, an' if you'd take the time to show me, I'd soon break in."

"Well, say, One-one-four, you're gettin' to be a reg'lar glutton for work, ain't you? Tryin' mighty hard to be a fisherman? Well, I'll give you a lift if you want to dress down this afternoon. We'll get at it, seein''s how I ain't got any great sight of cookin' to be done; but what about leavin' Seth here all alone?"

"Don't you worry 'bout me," the invalid said cheerily. "I ain't countin' that anybody must stay just 'cause I can't get out of the bunk, so go ahead an' show Tim how to cut open a fish."

When Captain Ben and Reuben Hardy returned with the first dory-load, Abram and Tim had given no slight proof of their ability to dress down, and the captain cried, as if this evidence of their willingness to work pleased him very decidedly:

"Now that's somethin' to make a man feel good, after all the nonsense we've been havin'! I don't

believe that the galley-cap'n of this 'ere schooner can afford to spend his time doin' the work of men; but all the same it comes in mighty handy jest now. Keep at it, my hearties, an' let the cowards of the crew see what the cook an' a lad can do while they 're scarin' themselves most to death!"

Captain Ben was not the only one who cheered these two at their work. They were praised by almost every man who came alongside, and there can be no doubt but that the example which they were setting was of benefit to all hands, for when night came the crew of the *Hylow* were in a much more cheerful mood.

It was after the second half had finished their supper, and preparations were being made for the work of the night, that Bob Ahearn said to Captain Ben, speaking in a tone so loud that every one must necessarily hear him:

"You allowed, Cap'n, that you'd take one of the crew an' stand guard over the trawls to-night."

"Ay, that was my agreement, an' I'm countin' on keepin' it."

"I've been thinkin' this past hour, that there's one place hereabouts which has n't been looked over, an' there's jest a chance that by skippin' it we've given Bates the show he wants. How would it do if,

instead of your pullin' 'round among the trawls tonight, you'd let One-one-four go off with me?"

- "Where are you countin' on goin', Bob?"
- "To Sable Island."
- "Why, man dear, even if you could make a landin' on the southerly side, which I misdoubt, it'd take from now till sunrise to get there an' back, to say nothin' of searchin' the sandpit, an' in case of pullin' round the other point you'd need more'n twelve hours."
- "I don't care how much work 's needed; I'm willin' to put it all in, an' I'm not askin' any man to give me a lift with the oars. I'll even drop the idee of takin' Tim with me, if you say the word, 'cause this 'ere mystery has got to be cleared up, an' that mighty soon."
- "I've got nothin' to say agin your goin'; it's the extra work I'm thinkin' of, an' there's no reason why Tim should n't go with you, although it would only be for the sake of company, 'cause I don't allow he'd make any great fist at handlin' a dory. But s'pose you should find your man there, you'd need more'n a lad if it came to a scrimmage, for I reckon you'd count on bringin' him aboard?"
- "I'll agree to handle Bates if I find him, don't you have any fear about that, an' what's more, he'll come aboard. I'd be ashamed to show my nose

among decent folks if I could n't handle that cur!"

"Have your own way, lad, though I misdoubt your findin' him, for however willin' he is to do us a mischief, it don't stand to reason he'd pull out from Sable Island to our trawls, an' back each night. That would be payin' too high a price for the dancin'."

"It's the only place where he could find a hidin' that we have n't searched, an' I'm foolish enough to believe he must be there."

"Then get below now, you an' Tim, an' eat your supper so's to be off as soon as possible."

Thus it was settled, much to the delight and surprise of One-one-four, that a visit should be made to that dreary sand-bar where only the light-keepers and life-savers dwelt, and if one could judge from the expression on the faces of the crew, all hands were well pleased to have Bob make the venture, for even the least superstitious among them would be more comfortable in mind when it was known how Jerry Bates had succeeded in keeping himself hidden from view.

Much and varied was the advice given by the crew, and particularly by Ezra Snow, while Bob and Tim were hurriedly eating supper. Each man seemed to think he had a plan, either for landing on the sand-bar or of searching for the mischief-maker, which was better than any that could be devised by

another, but to all of them Ahearn turned a deaf ear, saying:

"It don't make any difference how we figure it, 'cause things may not turn out as we 're reckonin'. I 'm goin' to land on Sable Island, even if I have to make the whole turn of the nor'east bar, but it should be possible to put a dory ashore there in such weather as this almost anywhere. It ain't advice we 're needin', but it's grub; an' I 'm lookin' to Abram to outfit us for thirty-six hours, 'cause there's a chance we'll be gone that long."

"You shall have the best there is aboard," Mr. Doak replied promptly, "an' I've already begun to get it ready. Plenty of water in the dory?"

"It would be hard lines when a fisherman on Sable Island Bank made the mistake of leavin' his dory-cask empty," Bob said with a laugh, and, ten minutes later, followed by all his mates, he went on deck, Abram bringing up the rear with a bag of food which apparently contained sufficient to provide for the wants of half a dozen men during the proposed time of absence.

Tim remained behind only long enough to say to Seth, as he patted him affectionately on the cheek:

"Now don't get lonesome, nor don't worry 'bout us. It's a mighty big shame you can't come too, for I'm countin' it'll be the tallest kind of a time. Just think of it, Seth! We're goin' ashore on Sable Island, an' Joe Barker says there's precious few of the oldest fishermen that ever did such a thing! I'll have somethin' to tell about when I get home, eh?"

"I'll get along all right, Timmy. You need n't fuss 'cause I can't go with you. Perhaps I would n't want to even if my leg was whole. I ain't so much of a sailor as you are, an' tumblin' 'round in one of them little boats don't seem like so very much fun."

"Hello, Tim! Get a move on if you're goin' with me!" Bob Ahearn shouted from the deck, and Oneone-four was forced to cut short his leave-taking.

Then the dory was pulled northward, while Tim, sitting in the stern-sheets, tried hard to appear unconcerned, although he was literally puffed up with pride because of having been selected as Ahearn's mate, and Bob cried to those on the deck who were watching him anxiously as if fearing he might meet with some sore disaster even at the outset:

"Don't let Ezra stuff you too full of signs, an' try not to be seein' any ghosts till we get back. I'll fetch Bates with me, or else allow he an' old Nick have struck up a partnership."

Looking back, Tim could see that the men were making ready for the night's work, and it was almost like leaving home, to be pulling away from the Hylow as she lay there rising and falling gently on the lazy swell, as pretty a picture of marine architecture as the most ardent sailor could wish to look at.

"She's a bird, ain't she?" he said admiringly, and Bob laughed as he replied:

"I declare for it, One-one-four, there's more of the sailor to you than I allowed. You'll be a firstclass fisherman in another season by keepin' on as you've begun."

"Do you really think so, Bob?"

"Of course I do, else I would n't say it. I ain't a man what talks jest for the fun of the thing. I'm willin' to admit that you 've taken hold in good shape, an' if this cruise had n't been hoodooed you'd be doin' a man's work by this time. What a shame it is that Cap'n Ben ever thought of takin' on sich a sneak as Jerry Bates!"

"It looks like he was goin' to spoil everythin', don't it?"

"Well, he's made a pretty good fist at it so far; but if any of our crew ever get hold of him he won't do more'n walk a chalk-line for the rest of his life."

"S'pose you find him, what're you countin' on doin'?"

"That's what I can't tell you, Timmy. I don't know's I'm stuck on beatin' his life out, same's some of 'em are; but the main thing is to be able to

go back an' tell the fellows where he's been hidin' so they 'll get this ghost business out of their minds. Howsomever, we won't talk 'bout what we're countin' on doin', till we're sure it's possible to do it. We've got a good ten-mile pull from here to the island, so it would n't do a bit of harm for you to bottle up a little sleep. If you're countin' on bein' a fisherman, you'll have to gather in forty winks whenever there's a chance."

Tim could not have closed his eyes in slumber however weary he might have been. This sailing over the lazy waves in the night, searching for a runaway sailor, had so much of fascination in it to the lad that, as he said, he wanted to keep his eyes open every minute so he should n't miss any of it. Then again, the fact that he was Bob Ahearn's dory-mate for the time being, was sufficient to render him wakeful, and he promised himself that when he was in the home-port once more, every lad of his acquaintance should be informed of the proud distinction which he had won.

During this long time of labor at the oars Bob alternately sang and whistled some sea ditty, leaving One-one-four to his own pleasing thoughts, and thoroughly did the lad enjoy himself until they were come so near the island that it was possible to hear the beating of the surf upon the sands.

"Why don't you land up by the light-house?"
Tim asked.

"I've heard it said that it was the least likely place on this side. I reckon we'll strike as near 'midships as we can, an' take the chances. You want to keep your eye peeled when we get close in, for it ain't any two to one that we don't get rolled over an' over half a dozen times. I ain't much of a duck at landin' in the surf; but I'm willin' to take the risk for the sake of clearin' up what Ezra insists is sich a terrible mystery."

Tim could not force himself to be frightened at the prospect of being caught by the ground-swell, so enchanting was the idea of landing on a place where but few of the oldest Bankers had ever stepped, and it seemed quite a matter of course to him that Bob should be able to carry the dory in on the crest of a wave successfully.

Then it was a case of leaping out and hauling her up beyond reach of the next wave, after which they were at liberty to pursue their search on this most desolate of islands.

A narrow ridge of sand, curved in the shape of a new moon, is Sable Island, lying far out in the ocean surrounded by treacherous shoals. It is the most forlorn, uninviting place that can well be imagined; but to Tim it was a land of enchantment.

"This is great!" he cried enthusiastically as he and Bob ploughed their way through the loose sand in the direction of the northeast light, whose tower rose black against the lighter sky, its lantern sending forth cheering rays as it had done night after night in the years that had passed, to warn mariners of the hidden dangers.

"Don't you s'pose they saw us when we landed?" Tim asked, speaking in a whisper, for so overpowering was the sense of loneliness that it really seemed as if the sound of a human voice might bring upon them some terrible danger.

"Perhaps so; but I reckon on a night like this, when there's no call for it, they won't be keepin' any very sharp lookout. Visitors must be few an' far between on this 'ere island, an' I'm allowin' that we'll give 'em considerable of a surprise, if so be they didn't sight us when we came ashore."

Tim hoped fervently that they might be able to make their way to the very door of the tower without being observed, for he was eager to see how much of alarm would be shown by the keepers when strangers suddenly appeared before them.

In this, however, he was disappointed, for while they were yet some distance from the tower a twinkling light came dancing along toward them, and Bob said in a matter-of-fact tone, as One-one-four clasped him nervously by the arm:

"It's one of the life-savin' crew makin' his rounds, I reckon. Them fellows have to keep movin' about jest so much on the lookout for trouble, though they can't be expectin' a great deal to-night."

As the lantern came nearer it was possible to distinguish in the gleam behind it the form of a man, but no note of surprise could be detected in his tone as he shouted cheerily:

"Ahoy! Where are you bound?"

"He must have seen us when we landed," Tim whispered in deepest disappointment.

"There's nothin' wrong, matey. We're lookin' for a man that might have come ashore here yesterday, or the day before," Bob replied as a man with bushy black whiskers, and shoulders stooped as if he had been halibuting all his life, held the lantern so that he might be seen.

"There's been nobody land here to my knowledge since the light-house tender came last month, an' even then the inspector did n't allow he'd better take the chances of runnin' in through the surf. Lost one of your mates?"

"Well, I can't say whether we've lost him, or if he's lost hisself. He's missin' from the crew, an' has been doin' a lot of mischief in the way of cuttin' trawls. We've searched everywhere among the fleet, an' it's claimed that nobody knows anythin' bout him, so we made up our minds he must be here, seein' 's there's no other place for him to go."

"He is n't on this island, that I can swear, for I've made the rounds six times since yesterday mornin'. Tell me how he happened to leave you? If so be you're willin', you'd better come into the tower, where all hands will be glad to give you a welcome, for visitors ain't frequent hereabout."

"There's no reason why I should n't spin the yarn; but I don't know as I've got any warrant for spendin' more time ashore than is necessary, seein's how we're bound to get back as soon as may be," Bob replied, and even while partially declining the invitation, he accepted it by following the life-saver, for he could understand very well how eager the men on this lonely strip of sand would be to see a stranger.

It was a veritable fairy-land to Tim, that circular room fitted up much like the cabin of a ship, and having a certain homely air which must have been intensified when the wind was howling outside, and the white-crested waves leaping like tigers against the base of the structure.

A hearty welcome did these lonely dwellers on the island, whose only mission was to save lives, give Bob

and Tim, and while Ahearn told the story of what Bates had done since he came aboard the *Hylow*, the inmates of the light-house set out food and coffee for the refreshment of their guests.

"I'm not wonderin' your crew is a bit mixed up," one of the men said when Bob had come to an end of his story. "I ain't given to bein' superstitious, even though I do spend my time down here where a fellow has a good chance for all sich outlandish fancies; but I'd feel a bit squirmy myself to have a mate disappear in such a way, an' know by the mischief bein' done that he was hangin' 'round somewhere. He'll get a tough reception if he lands here. Glad as we are to see a visitor now an' then, we draw the line at trawl-cutters."

"Are you feelin' reasonably certain he ain't aboard some of the other vessels?" another of the men asked, and Bob told of what had been done in the way of a search, saying in conclusion:

"It don't seem possible that there's a skipper in the fleet who'd take sich a villain, knowin' what he's up to, an' we've passed the story 'round to every craft. But of course that's where he must be, since he ain't here, yet it's pretty hard to believe it, for a vessel don't come this way without a full crew, an' it's little a cap'n could gain by takin' on a spare man." Then, wearied with the subject, and gravely disappointed because no result was to be had from the visit, Bob turned to that member of the party who appeared to be in command:

"Ain't it killin' lonesome down here?"

"Well, there are times when it gets a bit that way, say from October till May, when you can't put a boat out, an' there's no chance of even speakin' the light-house tender. I've known the inspector to come here as many as eight times without bein' able to send so much as a newspaper ashore. Then's when we kind er get a hankerin' for a strange face," the keeper replied. "But bless you, we soon get used to that sort of thing. There's twelve of us here, all told, an' we don't have so many spare minutes in the day, what with reg'lar duties, an' workin' for ourselves."

"I should think it'd be worse than a jail," Bob said with an involuntary shudder.

"Now that's where you make a mistake, matey. In jail a man don't have anythin' to do but breathe. Here we have lots to look after, 'cordin' to the regerlations, an' it takes up a good part of the forenoon. Then there's always some tinkerin' to be done 'round the buildins an' on the boats, an' a man has in his mind all the while the reason for bein' here. We can't figure how many lives are saved every year

by our havin' these lights burnin' shipshape, but we do know we're of some good in this world. There's of course, once in a while, a cap'n that'll get reckless: comes too far in when this 'ere bar is a leeshore, an' then we have our work cut out for us. I can count two hundred an' seventy-one wrecks with the timbers still showin' here an' there above the sand; but a good many of 'em struck here before these lights were built. I'm allowin' that if somebody like us did n't stay here to show you fishermen the shoal waters on Sable Island Bank, by this time you could n't put your foot down without strikin' what's left of some good craft. Of course it's lonely at times, but bless your hearts, that's why the government don't take on any but single men at sich jobs as this. We've made up our minds to stay here, believin' we're havin' some little part in the world even though we're so far away."

Then one man after another told of this wreck or of that which he had seen, Tim drinking in eagerly every word, until Bob suddenly sprang to his feet as he exclaimed:

"I'm blest if I had n't forgot that there was sich a craft as the *Hylow* ever launched! Get a move on, Tim, old man, or Cap'n Ben'll give us a dressin' down for sogerin'."

If the dwellers on that lonely sand-bar could have

had their will, the visitors would have remained many days; but, understanding why Bob should return, they showed their hospitality by "speeding the parting guest."

There was real danger, for a man not accustomed to the surf, to launch a dory there, even though the sea was mild, as on this night; but, thanks to the life-savers and the light-keepers, the embarkation was accomplished in a most satisfactory manner.

Bob and Tim took their seats in the boat, with two of the men on either side holding her steady as the largest of a series of waves came rolling up with a hissing roar, and then she was dexterously shoved back with the undertow, when half a dozen strokes of the oars sent her out into deep water, all danger passed.

"Good-bye! I'd like mighty well to come an' stay all summer!" Tim shouted, standing up in the stern-sheets that the hospitable party might see him more plainly.

"Good-bye! We'd like to have you! Come ashore if you get another chance, an' we'll try to make things pleasant for yer!"

Then communication between Sable Island and the dory was broken off, as Bob buckled down to the oars, and Tim said as he snuggled himself in the stern-sheets:

"This is what I call havin' a good time, an' say, perhaps it won't be anythin' to tell about when we get home! I'll fill Mike so full of what we did to-night that he'll jest about bust hisself 'cause he was n't here."

"If I ever catch Mike tossin' his head towards a fisherman's life I'll make things warm for him."

"Why?" Tim asked in surprise. "Do you think a fellow could do anythin' better?"

"Better!" Bob echoed. "Could he do anythin' worse, lad? Riskin' his life day in an' day out for the few dollars that 's comin' to him at the end of the cruise! I ain't talkin' 'bout a trip like this, though a man is takin' chances enough even now; but of layin' off here in the winter, fishin' one day an' fightin' the wind an' sea the next five, for the privilege of comin' back an' tryin' it agin; settin' trawls off an' on, droppin' a line when you can, an' sogerin' when you can't do anythin' else. Why, a berth aboard a fisherman is a fool's job 'longside of any other kind of work a man can do!"

"But why do you stick to it, if you think it's so bad?"

"I'll tell you, Timmy. It's that I ain't fit for much of anythin' else. I was a good deal sich a kid as you are, thinkin' there was nothin' in the world to go ahead of fishin', an' I 'tended out on school

'bout as you've done, with the consequence that I've got to hold to this business 'cause nobody wants me at anythin' else. Take my advice, lad. When you get home store up as much education as you can, so 's you may hold your head among the best of 'em, an' not have it said you didn't know enough to do anythin' but go fishin'."

CHAPTER XV.

SETH'S DREAM.

Seth had promised that he would not be lonely while Tim was visiting Sable Island, and yet he knew full well that he could not keep his word. He was, so far as the crew of the *Hylow* could see, bearing up bravely under his confinement, which must have been irksome, to say the least. For a boy to remain in one position and one place day in and day out is hard, exceedingly hard, and when he does this without murmuring, those around him say he is brave.

Therefore was Seth brave; but his shipmates did not know of the many times when he turned his head on the blanket-pillow so that his tears might not be seen. Nor could they realize how often he had striven unsuccessfully against the pain in his heart and the longing for home and for mother.

More than once did Abram Doak tell this or the other member of the crew that Seth had "a heap of sand for a boy of his age," and because he apparently bore his troubles with a smiling face, every man aboard the *Hylow* did what little he could toward cheering him.

On this night, when Tim went away with Bob, Abram was summoned from the cuddy to Ahearn's place in the work of dressing down, and therefore during some hours the crippled lad was left entirely alone. As a matter of course he slept during a portion of the time; yet it was not that sleep which comes from exhaustion induced by manual labor, sound and refreshing, but broken and feverish.

Shortly after midnight the lad was awakened by the coming of those who had been dressing down, the work being finished, and during ten minutes or more he listened to the jests or the discussions as to whether Bob would be successful, or answered many questions concerning his own welfare.

Then the tired men sought the repose they needed, and all was silent on board the schooner, for while the weather remained fine it was not thought necessary to have a watch on deck during the few hours remaining before another day would come.

Seth lay there listening to the uneasy slumber of the men, himself made more wakeful by it, but the gentle rise and fall of the schooner was in a certain degree soothing, therefore perhaps one might say he was partially unconscious even while yet remaining awake.

In this dreamy condition the lad fancied he saw some one come softly down the companion-stairs.

As a matter of course he gave little or no heed to it, save that he might have wondered who the visitor was; but if he had been able to question himself regarding the matter, would have said without hesitation that some member of the crew from the aftercabin had come for a mug of coffee, for by this time Seth knew that fishermen drank coffee in season and out, without regard to quantity.

The new-comer was exceedingly cautious in his movements, but, of course, that was in order that he might not awaken his mates. He opened the provision-locker carefully, and then came that which seemed a bit strange to the half-sleeping boy. The man was taking out of the locker what appeared to be a large quantity of food, and putting it in a bag, instead of eating it then and there. This done the visitor stole softly up the companion again, and Seth, by moving his head ever so slightly, could see the retreating form going aft.

The crippled lad gave very little heed to this occurrence, save that he dimly wondered why a bag was used to carry the food to the cabin, and then he fell asleep. When next he awakened there was a doubt in his mind as to whether there had really been a visitor in the cuddy, or if he dreamed it, and before morning the matter had nearly passed from his mind. Half an hour after daybreak, while Abram was frying cods' tongues and sounds, filling the little cuddy with dense fumes of smoke, a voice from the deck shouted:

"Here comes Bob, an' unless Jerry Bates is in the bottom of the boat, Ahearn has had his pull to Sable Island an' back for nothin'!"

"Of course he'd be in the bottom of the dory," Abram said, speaking to no one in particular as he attended to the duties of cooking the largest amount of food in the shortest possible space of time. "Do you 'spose Bob Ahearn'd be fool enough to let the trawl-cutter take his ease in the stern-sheets? We'll have the pleasure of overhaulin' him in proper shape before long, for it stands to reason they found him on the island."

If Mr. Doak had not been so occupied with his duties as cook he might have gone on deck to make ready for the reception of the supposed prisoner, but at such a time in the morning he could not well leave the cuddy, therefore no one save Seth saw the bitter disappointment written on Abram's face when the second cry was heard:

"They're comin' as they went, alone, an' since Bob Ahearn has had a hand in the search, you can set it down as a fact that Jerry Bates is not on Sable Island!" "Well, I'll be jiggered!" Abram exclaimed, and in his excitement he let fall the pan of corn-bread which he was just taking from the oven. "If this 'ere crew has n't got a black eye then I'm no judge! There's nothin' but a little dust on this bread, an' so long as the men don't know it, it won't do 'em any harm," he added as he brushed the top of the loaf with a not over-cleanly whisk-broom. "I'm beginnin' to believe there's more in signs than the cap'n'll allow, though it does seem kind of a puzzle how Jim Sullivan's biddin' Ezra good-bye on shore could work all this 'ere mischief."

"You don't believe it did, do you?" Seth asked with a laugh.

"Well, I did n't, lad, up to this minute; but now I'm beginnin' to have my suspicions, an' there's more'n me aboard who'll feel kind er shaky after it's known that Jerry Bates ain't hidin' somewhere in the fleet or on the island. I tell you, Seth, it begins to look skeery!"

"He's on one of the other vessels, that's where he is, of course, 'cause he's bound to be somewhere," Seth said emphatically.

"That's the way it'd seem, I'm free to admit, but on the other hand, I've yet to hear of the master of a fisherman who'd harbor a trawl-cutter while he's at his work. Lad, it's my opinion that we'd all of us make money in the long run if we put back to Portland, an' started all over agin. I'll go so far as to say that it'd pay us to dump overboard what fish we've got, so's to show that we didn't really count on makin' a cruise."

The uproar which could be heard from the deck told that those who had visited Sable Island were returned, and Abram, regardless of the food on the stove which needed his immediate attention, ran up the companion-way eagerly.

Bob's story had already been told, and, as is known, it was a short one.

"He ain't there; that much I can swear to."

"Did you search every inch of that blessed sandbar?" Reuben Hardy cried, and Bob was forced to admit that he had not.

"What was the use?" he asked. "We met one of the life-savers, an' went into the light-house. They could take their 'davy's there had n't been anybody there since the tender came out last, an' seein' 's how they 're obliged to make the rounds every two hours, it stands to reason all hands knew what they was talkin' about."

"All the same Bates might have been there, an' they was tryin' to hide him," Hardy added, unwilling to believe it was impossible to learn the whereabouts of the mischief-maker.

"Yes, he may be sailin' 'round somewhere up in the clouds on a pair of wings, but he ain't," Bob cried, now growing angry. "You know as well as I do, Reuben, that them fellows would n't lie to us, 'specially about such a thing as Jerry Bates."

"I vote that we up anchor an' make for home," Ezra said, speaking so that all might hear him. "The cruise is hoodooed, an' there ain't a livin' show of our gettin' a full fare till we've made port agin."

"If I hear any more such talk as that I'll break my word by runnin' into Halifax an' landin' him as makes it!" and Captain Ben suddenly appeared through the after companion-way. "Turned babies agin, have yer, 'cause you can't get a sight of Jerry Bates? Who's runnin' this 'ere schooner, you or me, Ezra Snow? You've spent your whole life huntin' down signs an' omens, an' findin' out about this thing or that, an' what's come of it? When you stepped aboard the Hylow you had n't one dollar to rub agin another, an' why? 'Cause, instead of 'tendin' to your work, you 're tryin' to find out what is in the future, which no man can do, an' lucky for him he can't. I was willin' to bear with your foolishness a while, thinkin' you'd get talked out, an' come to understand what an idjut you was. Now I'm sayin' we're here for fish an' nothin' more, an' fish we're goin' to have if I put every bloomin' man

ashore an' take 'em myself! You can't accuse me of bein' other 'n a skipper who 's always looked after his men, an' been friendly with 'em; but I 've done with that for the rest of this cruise. Now I 'll show you what drivin' means—give you a taste of the Gloucesterman's way, an' drive, drive, drive from mornin' till night, an' on to mornin' agin!"

There were very few aboard the *Hylow* who had ever seen Captain Ben so angry as he was at that moment, and never one ventured to make reply. The men of the first half went below sheepishly, and those who remained on deck took good care not to hold conversation within range of the cuddy-companion, from which the captain might see them.

Bob Ahearn, however, made no hesitation about airing his vews, for they were such as would have been approved of by the captain.

"I said I'd find him, an' have n't done it. Now if we can't keep our trawls down in any other way than by watchin', let's watch 'em, an' not get scared 'cause of what we can't see. I've come to believe that there's a skipper in yonder fleet who has taken Bates aboard, for of course that's the only natural conclusion, an' if we keep our eyes peeled we'll nab him—hello, what's the Sadie Lawrence gettin' under way for?"

The vessel to which Bob thus attracted attention

was well known among the Portland fleet, and often succeeded in bearing off the honors from Captain Ben Willard by getting the first cargo. She had left port two weeks before the *Hylow*, and fished down along the Georges before coming off Sable Island, therefore the fact of her being under way told that her hold had been filled.

"They have n't had anybody 'round cuttin' their trawls, that 's why they 've got a full fare," Ezra Snow said enviously, and then bethinking himself of the opportunity which offered, he shouted down the cuddy-companion:

"Below there! Any letters for home? Here's the Sadie Lawrence makin' ready to leave us!"

"Where's the one I wrote?" Tim cried, running below and coming up a moment later with the result of his own and Mr. Doak's efforts at imparting information.

One-one-four watched the Sadie Lawrence as she filled away, making a wide circle in order to come down past all the fleet, and he understood, as dory after dory put out from the different vessels, that this was the way the home-returning fishermen gathered the mail.

It was Reuben Hardy who took Tim's letters, with half a dozen others from the various members of the crew, and tied them together on a belaying pin that they might be tossed aboard the oncoming vessel readily. Tim watched with no little interest until he saw one of the Sadie Lawrence's men pick up the missives as they fell on the deck forward, and carry them aft.

"How long will it be before she gets to Portland?" the lad asked of the man nearest him.

"Well, if she don't have any more of a breeze than this, it'll be quite a spell; but with any kind of a wind she ought'er do it in two or three days."

"Then my mother 'll know jest how it was I came away," he said to himself, "an' I 'll be a pretty good kind of a fisherman by the time she sees me agin. Bob tries to make out that it's a mean business; but if it was, how is it that everybody thinks so much of Cap'n Ben? I ain't goin' into it jest for the sake of gettin' money to spend foolishly; but I 'll buy a vessel some day as good as this one, an' run her myself."

Then One-one-four followed the second half to breakfast, and very shortly afterward the crew of the *Hylow*, not daring to brave the captain's wrath by speaking of Jerry Bates, went away in the dories to begin the day's work, leaving Mr. Doak and the two lads to keep ship as before.

After One-one-four had talked with his crippled mate, cheering him to the best of his ability, and aided Mr. Doak in his culinary operations, there was

absolutely nothing more he could do. Much to his surprise time began to drag. He had never before believed it possible there could be a dull moment for a fisherman.

"It strikes me, if I was a lad who'd been callin' on the folks at Sable Island all night, an' jest come aboard, so to speak, I'd lie down an' try to make up some of the sleep I'd lost," Mr. Doak said as he observed Tim's restlessness. "I'm allowin' that you'll be called on to do your share of the work at dressin' down after sunset, an' there's some knives to be ground before then."

"Perhaps that's what's the matter with me; I ought'er go to sleep," Tim said, and straightway lay down in the bunk opposite Seth's, intending to converse with his friend until the desire for slumber should come upon him, but before he had time even to think of a subject he was wafted into dreamland, not to be called therefrom until a loud voice from the deck brought him to his feet.

It was the captain of the galley, who had awakened him by shouting evidently in answer to a hail from out-board:

"Ahoy in the dory! What's wanted?"

"Have you lost a boat from this 'ere schooner?"

Tim was on deck in a twinkling, and saw, lying close alongside, a dory in which were two men who

had evidently been running trawls and were returning to their own schooner, for the craft was nearly filled with fish.

"What's that?" Abram cried excitedly. "Lost a boat? Well if you've found one that's got the meanest kind of a sneak in it, we have. We shipped a man by the name of Bates, who was the toughest specimen of a banker I ever saw, an' after raising cain generally he lit out with one of the dories. We're lookin' for him a good deal harder than we are for the boat, seein' 's how he's been cuttin' our trawls for the last two or three nights."

"We have n't got any man belongin' to your schooner; but there was a dory drifted alongside the other night, an' when your cap'n was 'round we forgot to tell him 'bout it. We're the Susan Curtis, fourth schooner yonder to the west'ard."

"What color was the dory painted?"

"Yellow with a green gunnel, an' a red band inside, just like the one that's made fast astern here."

"That's our dory," Abram said as he rubbed his chin reflectively. "I ain't allowin' as any other fisherman in the fleet paints the same colors. Say Tim," he exclaimed, turning toward the lad who was just coming from the companion, "that 'ere boat they talk about must have been the one Bates went off in."

"You know we did n't find the dory that was upset," Tim suggested, and Abram turned quickly to the rail once more.

"Say, was the dory you found floatin' right side up?"

"Yes; had two oars an' a couple of gaffs in her."

"Then she can't be the one we upset. It's no use talkin'; she's bound to be the boat Bates stole."

"If you want her, she's moored astern the Susan, an' you can take her any time," the stranger said, evidently disappointed because his efforts to restore lost property had not been met with any show of gratitude, whereupon Mr. Doak remembered his duties as host.

"You kind er mixed me up, matey, with what you said about the dory, 'cause we've been in a terrible stew since Bates got away, not knowin' where he was hidin'. Come aboard an' mug-up, will yer? The cap'n 'll thank you for the word you've brought, though I do wish you'd said that sneak of a Jerry Bates was found doubled up inside of her, for we're achin' terrible bad to get our hands on him."

"Yes, we knew you must be havin' some kind of a row, seein' 's how you sent twice among the fleet to ask after him," the man said, speaking in a more friendly tone as he swung the dory around in order to accept the invitation, and five minutes later the visitors were seated comfortably in the cuddy, each with a mug of steaming coffee in his hand and a generous supply of fried pies on the table in front of him.

"What does that mate of yours count on gainin' by cuttin' trawls?" one of the visitors asked curiously, and Abram replied with no slight show of irritation:

"That's what's puzzlin' us; but the heft of our trouble is to know where the villain is hidin'. You see we've got aboard two or three that are mighty superstitious, an' they catch on every little thing to prove that we ought 'er put into port so 's to start over agin. This man Bates began to make hisself disagreeable before we was outside the Cape, an' he's kept at it ever since, till he run away. Come pretty nigh drownin' this boy," and Mr. Doak motioned with his thumb toward Tim. "Was the means of the fellow in the bunk gettin' his leg broken, to say nothin' of scaldin' my arm pretty nigh clean to the bone. Then the cap'n took a hand in the matter, an' lo an' behold Bates ain't here. Now the only thing that 'll quiet down our crew, so's they can 'tend to work, is the findin' of the scoundrel."

Then Abram told of Bob's visit to Sable Island, and of the search which had been made among the fleet, asking in conclusion: "Now what do you make of it?"

"It's a bloomin' riddle, that's what it is," one of the visitors said with an ominous shake of the head. "I'm mighty glad there's no such carryin's on aboard the Susan, for, while I ain't what you might call a superstitious man, I don't think I could stand any sich funny business. What's become of him?"

"Now see here, matey, that's a question that ought n't be asked aboard this craft agin. From mornin' till night, an' from night till mornin', it's all you can hear till I'm that sick of the words I don't dare to stick my head out of the companion-way, fearin' I'll get 'em slung at me."

"It's worse'n a fog," the second visitor said calmly, and then, emptying his mug, he went on deck followed by his companion. Abram pressed them to stay, for on this afternoon he was much like the dwellers on Sable Island, eager to entertain guests; but with a dory-load of fish alongside and more trawls yet to be run, it was hardly expected the visitors could remain longer.

When they had gone over the rail and were pulling leisurely in the direction of their vessel, Mr. Doak leaned against the fore-rigging, as if in view of all that had just passed he was in need of some support, and said in a sepulchral tone as he shook one soiled fore-finger in Tim's face:

"I'll tell you what it is, One-one-four, that 'ere Jerry Bates has gone an' drowned hisself jest to spite us."

"I don't see how he could spite us very much doin't that, do you?"

"Don't, eh? Well, jest look at it. He's cut the trawls an' kept out of our way till he saw we was goin' to find him, an' plunk he goes over the gunnel, countin' we would n't know he'd took his worthless life till we'd fretted ourselves clean down to the bone. His plan did n't work though, 'cause now we know where the dory is, an' it don't take a very sharp-witted man to tell where he is. I reckon Ezra'll be relieved when he hears all this."

Then Mr. Doak went below, and Tim followed to ask if there was anything he could do to help him.

"I reckon not, lad. I did a good bit of cookin' yesterday, an' if this 'ere crew can eat all the doughnuts I fried, inside of twenty-four hours, I'll call 'em gluttons right to their faces. See here," and Mr. Doak opened the locker in which he had stored the greasy dainties.

His chin dropped as he looked inside, and Tim would have had time to count no less than thirty before he spoke. Then it was he exclaimed in a tone of mingled bewilderment and anger:

"Well, I'll be teetotally jiggered!"

"What's the matter? What's gone wrong now?"

"Look in that 'ere locker! It was so full of doughnuts last night that I had to jam 'em down before I could shut the lid. There ain't any need of doin' much jammin' now, eh? I'd like to know what gormandizer's been 'round here? Why, say, Tim, there ain't enough men aboard this schooner to have eat them doughnuts since last night, an' all hand of 'em was on deck dressin' down at that! Well, I'm a sinner if that ain't the most s'prisin' thing I ever come across!"

"Perhaps it was rats," Tim suggested.

"Rats! I'd like to know where you'd get 'em, the Hylow not off the ways more'n four weeks! You don't allow we took a cargo aboard before startin' for fear of gettin' lonesome, do yer? Rats aboard a new schooner, an' the only time she laid at the dock was a couple of days while we was tied up at Customhouse wharf. Besides, how could rats get in the locker where there ain't any hole?"

"Some of the men has eaten them, of course," and Tim did not think there was anything so very curious about the matter.

"But I tell you, lad, it could n't been done if they'd set right here crowdin' 'em in all night. I had doughnuts enough to keep this 'ere crew eatin' for twenty-four hours, if they had n't done anythin' else, an' more 'n half of 'em is gone."

"Well it's sure pop I didn't touch 'em," Oneone-four said carelessly, and then Seth, remembering what was perhaps a dream, told Mr. Doak that which he fancied he saw during the night.

"That was when we was dressin' down, eh?"

"No, sir, all hands had turned in. I could hear 'em snorin'."

"Then it was some glutton that bunks in the cabin, an' now's my chance to find out who he is."

Mr. Doak went hurriedly aft, returning ten minutes later with a look of blank dismay upon his face.

"There ain't a blessed doughnut there, for I've searched every bunk an' bag! I tell you what it was, lad, you dreamed it, although it's kind er funny you should dream a thing an' then have it come true, was n't it? I declare I'm gettin' as bad as Ezra, an' it won't take but one or two things more like this to turn my hair white. Somethin''s wrong about the Hylow, an' this is her first cruise! I would n't ship in her agin, not if I had the best lay any man ever heard of. I've got enough of this business!" and Mr. Doak went on deck, where he fell to pacing to and fro as if in a brown study, until the first of the Hylow's dories returned with indisputable proof that the fishing yet remained good.

"We've found Jerry Bates!" Mr. Doak announced in a triumphant tone, and the dorymen, rising to their feet, shouted wildly to their mates who were astern:

"Abram's found Jerry Bates! Abram's found Jerry Bates!"

The cry rang from one boat to another, and Tim could see that all the crews were making strenuous efforts at speed that they might the sooner hear how the wonderful deed had been performed.

"Where is he?" the doryman who had first passed along the welcome news asked anxiously, hooking on his boat, but making no effort to discharge the cargo until he should have learned all the details.

- "Drownded!" Abram replied solemnly.
- "When did it happen?"
- "Night before last, most likely, for they've got the dory down to the Susan Curtis, an' she was right side up with the oars in her, so he must have jest jumped out."
 - "How did they find his body?"
 - "Find it? Why they have n't, of course."
 - "Then how do you know he's drownded?"
- "Ain't I tellin' you the dory 's down to the Susan Curtis?"
- "Is that all you know about it, you bloomin' drivler of a cook, an' me hurryin' up the lads by

tellin' 'em he was found? I'll get my head broke when they come aboard."

"If he ain't drownded, where is he?" Abram asked sharply, and as the doryman threw a fish at the cook's head with such accuracy of aim that Mr. Doak was knocked headlong into the cuddy, he shouted fiercely:

"I've got tired of that riddle, an' if you ever ask me agin where Jerry Bates is, you'll get a whole dory-load!"

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CHAPTER XVI.

A MISHAP.

The information which had been brought regarding the dory supposed to have been carried off by Jerry Bates afforded the crew of the Hylow great relief of mind. The fact that the boat had been picked up adrift seemed fairly good evidence Mr. Bates had either voluntarily abandoned her, or ended his life by going overboard. There were but few who believed this last might have occurred, and among those who felt convinced the sulky fisherman yet remained in the land of the living was Bob Ahearn.

"I tell you he's too mean to kill hisself! A sneak who'd be willin' to do what he's done would n't be generous enough to get out of the way so easy. I believe I've figured it all out, an' can come mighty nigh to tellin' what has happened."

"Got it all shaped up, same as when you decided he was on Sable Island," Ezra said sarcastically.

"My makin' a miss of it then only goes to help prove that this last guess is nearer right. Of course we know he's here somewhere, an' if he did n't drown hisself, then I'm allowin' he's on board some vessel of the fleet without the connivance of the crew. It could be done, you know," he added earnestly. "Now stop to think! S'pose some mean skunk of a fisherman had left one of them vessels same as Bates left the Hylow. Could n't he sneak aboard here in the night, durin' this calm weather, without our knowin' it, an' stow hisself in the hold? Of course he could! Bates is in one of these schooners nearabouts, unless he might have been lucky enough to hit on the Sadie Lawrence as a hiding-place, an' is now bound for Portland."

"What about his dory goin' adrift?"

"Why, he could n't have made her fast alongside, or she 'd have been a dead giveaway, of course."

"Well, allowin' your fig'rin' is nearer right than it was when you hit on Sable Island, jest tell me how he could come out whenever he pleased, to cut trawls?" Ezra asked with a certain note of triumph in his tone, believing he had upset Bob's reckoning, as indeed he had.

"I'll agree that 's a sticker!" Ahearn replied ruefully; "but even now I won't agree that he 's drowned hisself."

Captain Ben cut short what promised to be a heated discussion, by ordering the first half to table, and as soon as might be thereafter—for the skipper of the

Hylow did not intend his men should waste any time while in their present condition of mind—the crew were at work again, having remarkably good luck in the way of the catch.

On this afternoon Mr. Doak was forced to remain below in order to replenish the stock of doughnuts which had so suddenly disappeared, and Tim, rather than remain idle, set about dressing down alone, the cook coming on deck now and then to give him valuable hints as to how the work ought to be done.

It was on one of these advisory visits that Mr. Doak said, as he paused a second and scanned the horizon:

"It does beat all how this weather hangs on! I can't say as I ever saw so long a spell on this 'ere bank. Gen'rally we get a day or two, an' then it's cut an' run for two or three days more; but here we've had it right straight along, with no show of a break-up. It'll come mighty soon though, an' will be a snifter when we do get it. Puttin' aside all the mischief Bates has done us, we've got along fast considerin', an' Ezra'll have hard work to make out that Jim Sullivan brought bad luck to the schooner, though of course some of the crew, meanin' Seth an' you, have had it pretty rough."

One-one-four was still busily engaged cleaning fish when, at the close of the afternoon, the dories began to return, Ezra Snow being among the foremost,

and on seeing the lad striving so hard to perform a man's duty, he cried admiringly:

"You're a jewel, Tim, an' no mistake! First I did n't believe you had the makin's of a fisherman in you; but it begins to look as if you take to it jest as natural as a duck takes to water. It's a shame for a whiflet like you to be workin' alone, though. Say," he added to his dory-mate, "shove out this 'ere load of fish, an' I'll lend the boy a hand."

Mr. Snow leaped over the rail without waiting to learn whether his mate was willing to do as he had suggested, and, taking a knife from the combing of the hatch, after throwing a number of fish on the table, he said with an air of a schoolmaster:

"Now watch me a minute, Tim, an' you'll see why one long, quick stroke will open a fish cleaner than two or three short ones, same as you're puttin' in."

During half an hour or more this lesson was continued, One-one-four profiting considerably by the instruction, and the two had made no little headway in the work when the remainder of the dories arrived.

"I'm allowin' that the rest of us can knock off now, seein' 's how we 've a couple here who can dress down the whole catch before mornin'," Reuben Hardy cried with a laugh, as he began unloading his dory. "Say, One-one-four, look out for that spindle-shanks you've got with you! He never could open a fish in decent shape, an' unless you give him a few lessons he 'll be doin' more harm than good!"

"I was dressin' down aboard the crack vessels of the Portland fleet before you was born," Ezra said just a bit sharply, and Reuben, who only intended, as he afterwards said, "to stir Ezra up a bit," replied:

"Ay, so you was, an' makin' jest as lubberly a fist at it as you are now."

Then the others of the crew joined in gibing Mr. Snow until he lost his temper entirely, and wheeling about, as he flourished the knife above his head, he cried angrily:

"I'll agree to stand up against every man in this 'ere vessel, 'cept two, an' if I can't clean more fish, in better shape, to the hour, you may have what's comin' to me as my share of the cruise!"

"Let's see what you can do with this one," Reuben cried with a laugh, as he flung a huge haddock directly at Ezra's head, and the latter, dodging to avoid the well-aimed missile, slipped upon the gurry which covered the deck, falling headlong.

As a matter of course all hands shouted in glee, for it was a rare bit of sport to see one who claimed so much for himself floundering upon the slimy deck. While the merriment was at its height Tim noticed with alarm that Mr. Snow made no effort to rise.

"Are you hurt much?" he asked solicitously,

dropping the knife as he ran around the table, and then to his horror saw blood gushing from Ezra's throat.

"He's killed! The knife must have stuck into him when he went down!" the lad cried in terror, striving in vain to raise the prostrate form.

In a twinkling every voice was stilled, as to a man the crew ran to give assistance, while those in the dories leaped over the schooner's rail at imminent risk of getting an ugly fall.

Captain Ben, who was on the point of descending the cabin-companion, gained Tim's side before any of the others, and as he turned Ezra over in order to raise his head, all could see that the sailor's face was covered with blood.

"Bring fresh water, an' tell Abram to make bandages of a white shirt he'll find in my chest! Bear a hand lively, lads! Ezra is hurt pretty bad, an' we can't afford to lose any time. No, I don't reckon he's cut an artery—the blood flows evenly—but how he contrived to miss one I don't understand."

During the next ten minutes or more everything was confusion and alarm aboard the *Hylow*; but at the end of that time Captain Ben had succeeded in checking the flow of blood.

Not a word had been spoken, save when the skipper called for this article or that to be used in the Hardy, who was the innocent cause of the accident, stood pale-faced and trembling, watching every movement, but seemingly unable, because of his terror, to render any assistance. As a matter of fact, Mr. Doak and Tim were the only ones who retained their presence of mind, and the latter, who was wiping away the blood while Captain Ben brought the edges of the wound together, fastening them with adhesive plaster, was the first to break the ominous silence.

"Are you feelin' better, Mr. Snow?" he asked tremulously, and the sailor replied angrily, as if making some promise to himself:

"If I ever run across Jim Sullivan I'll come mighty near knockin' the head off his shoulders, an' the next man that says good-bye to me when I'm startin' out on a cruise'll get it good an' hot!"

"I reckon you're all right now, Ezra," Captain Ben said in a tone of relief. "If you've got back on your signs an' omens I allow there's little danger but that you'll pull through."

"Pull through? Of course I will," Mr. Snow cried irritably. "Who ever thought I would n't?"

"Well, if the knife had struck a quarter of an inch to starboard, I'm allowin' you would n't know much of anythin' by this time."

"That seems to be the only piece of luck in the

whole business, don't it!" and Mr. Snow struggled to raise himself from Tim's arms.

"Hold steady where you are, lad!" Captain Ben cried sharply. "You can't afford to move 'round very much, for I ain't surgeon enough to draw that cut together as it ought'er be, an' if you wiggle any great, it's liable to open. Now's when you'll take a bunk in the cuddy with Seth, unless it so be you'd feel better in the cabin."

"I ain't so certain that I 've got to be cuddled up like that," Ezra replied irritably.

"Well, I am, an' that settles it. Bear a hand here, some of you lads, an' help him for'ard. See to it that he ain't jarred when you lift him inter his bunk, for there's no knowin' what'll happen if he strains himself."

Reuben Hardy was one of those who sprang forward to obey the command, and he said in an imploring tone, as he put his arm almost affectionately around Ezra:

"Say, old man, it was a fool-trick of mine, an' I'm the one who's to blame for all this, but you won't lay it up agin me, will yer?"

"Agin yer?" Ezra repeated as if in astonishment.
"What did you have to do with it?"

"Why, I was the one that threw the haddock, of course."

"Well, what did that have to do with it?" Ezra asked as if in surprise. "Jim Sullivan's the man who's to blame for all this. If he had n't hailed me on Fore Street it would n't have happened."

"I reckon we can count pretty certain that Ezra is as near whole as a man can be who's jest cut his throat," Bob Ahearn said laughingly, and then he and Reuben, with more of tenderness than one would have believed could be displayed by such men, assisted the wounded fisherman below.

"There's no use talkin', the Hylow's in a bad streak of luck, an' it won't be much better till she makes Portland Head," Ezra said when he had been stowed away in the bunk opposite Seth's, and was apparently resting comfortably. "If I was Cap'n Ben I would n't wait for any more fish; but get back, an' then I'd allow we only left port to try out the new vessel, or do a bit of trawlin' so 's to salt her down in good shape. First it was Seth, an' now it's me! I tell you lads, one after the other of this 'ere crew'll be knocked out of time till there ain't men enough aboard left sound an' whole to get the schooner under way."

"There'll have to be a heap of manglin' done before that happens, Ezra," Mr. Doak cried cheerily, as he hurriedly set about making ready the supper which had been so long delayed on account of the accident. "I reckon if it comes to a pinch, One-one-four an' I could take her back to port, an' do what nussin' would be needed meanwhile."

The crew set about the task of caring for their fish before the evening meal was ready, for there was much work to be done on this night owing to the fact that the catch had been unusually large. When Abram finally announced that he was ready for the first half, the second half continued at the dressing tables that no time might be lost, and each man ate hurriedly, understanding that unless unusual diligence was observed there would be no opportunity for getting "forty winks" before the time came for putting off in the dories once more.

Then, when the hunger of all had been appeased, and Tim and Abram were on deck with the remainder of the crew doing their full share of the work, Seth and Ezra amused each other so successfully that the lad finally asked:

"How long do you suppose you'll have to stay here, Mr. Snow?"

"There's no tellin'. I allow I might get out in a day or two if I was allowed my own head, but if Cap'n Ben takes the notion that he wants to try experiments on me, so's he'll be better fitted to tackle another case of the kind, I may be laid up a couple of weeks for all I know. Why do you ask, son?"

"'Cause it's so nice to have company down here. You can't imagine how lonesome it is when all hands are on deck, an' there's nobody to speak with."

"Yes, I can, lad, for I once put in a week or more alone on the Maria Perkins, when I was that covered with gurry sores I could n't wink without screechin' an' thought one spell that I'd have to get them to belay my eyelids so 's I should n't hurt myself. I'm glad, though, if you 're gettin' any fun out of it. It seems as if I was havin' about as much luck as you, 'cause if we was n't both laid by the heels it stands to reason I'd be alone this blessed minute. I knew a man that got mixed up in a trawl-tub durin' a livin' gale, an' by the time we got him out he was cut an' slashed till his own grandmother would have passed him by on the street without lookin' at him."

Then Mr. Snow indulged in reminiscences, spinning yarns one after another of people and events who had come under his personal notice, until Seth was lulled to sleep.

It seemed very much as if, because of having a companion in the cuddy-hospital, Seth slept soundly for the first time since his mishap, and not until the sun was shining down the companion next morning did he open his eyes.

Then the first half were eating breakfast, Tim was bustling around assisting Mr. Doak and waiting upon

the men, and Ezra, speaking in a low tone lest his companion in misfortune should be awakened, was mapping out a course of action for the day such as would, in his opinion, lead to the discovery of how Jerry Bates had come to his end, if indeed he had.

Captain Ben, eager to make up for the time already wasted, was driving the crew in true Gloucester fashion, and the lazy rise and fall of the *Hylow* told that the fishing weather still held good. Then the dories were manned, and the fleet of little boats put out to begin the work of the day, while Abram and Tim, after eating their own breakfast, set about feeding the invalids.

This last task was completed, and the cuddy very nearly set to rights, when those below were startled by a shock against the side of the schooner, as if a dory had come head on at full speed.

"What lubber is let loose now?" Mr. Doak cried in an angry tone as he ran up the companion-way, and those below heard an exclamation of astonishment a moment later as he cried, "I'll be jiggered if it ain't Bob Ahearn! Have you gone crazy, lad, that you come aboard in such a landsman's fashion?"

"I don't know but that I am a bit cracked," Ahearn replied curtly. "I shall be off my head completely if this thing ain't cleared up mighty soon."

"What thing?" Mr. Doak asked curiously as he ran to the rail, and Tim came out of the cuddy in no little excitement.

"This Bates business," Bob said, as he nervously made the dory fast. "Two more trawls were cut last night, an' Cap'n Ben may say what he's a mind to, I'm through fishin' till we can get at the bottom of it in some way or another."

"Reg'larly knocked off?" and Mr. Doak held up his hands in astonishment, for Ahearn was the last member of the crew whom he would have selected as one who might run counter to the captain's commands.

"I've knocked off a spell anyway, but I'm not countin' on doin' very much idlin'. There's no use for us to hang 'round here while somebody's cuttin' our trawls every night, an' it strikes me the time's come to put an end to it."

"What do you mean? I allowed after you'd pulled over to Sable Island, that was about as much as you could do."

"There's one place in this'ere fleet that we have n't searched, an' I don't know of a likelier chance for Bates to hide. I allowed he might have crept aboard one of the other vessels, an' hid in her hold; but let that fool Ezra back me down by askin' chump questions as to how he could get out nights to do

mischief. I've got the idee in my head now that I'm on the right track, an' have come back to try it."

"What made you come here? Why did n't you keep right on?"

"It's here that I'm goin' to begin work. Right aboard the Hylow. Now see here," he added to his dory-mate, Joe Barker, "I want you an' Tim to stand guard at the hatch, an' if you should happen to see Bates tryin' to get out, knock him back."

"Tryin' to get out of our hold?" Mr. Doak cried in astonishment.

"Ay, Abram, the fool idee I 've got in my head is that he's below."

"But there's no chance that he—" Mr. Doak stopped speaking suddenly, as at that instant he remembered the unaccountable disappearance of the doughnuts, and, actually dancing up and down on the deck in his excitement, he said: "I believe you've hit it, Bob! I declare to goodness if all hands of us have n't been the thickest-headed, dumbest set of fishermen that ever struck the Banks! Somebody stole half a barrel of doughnuts the other night, an' I laid it on to one of the crew."

"Why did n't you tell me?" Bob cried angrily.

"It might have set us to thinkin' what we ought'er figgered out after hearin' that he was n't on any other craft in the fleet."

"If it did n't come inter my head, I reckon it would n't yours, for you 're not any brighter than the average."

"Perhaps I ain't, an' there's been times this mornin' when it struck me that my skull was thicker than most of the others; but there's no use in our arguin' here, Abram. You're comin' below with me, an' we'll make a clean search of this hold before agreein' that he ain't aboard."

Mr. Doak did not appear to be well pleased at thus being selected to take part in the search; but it would have shamed him had any of his mates suspected that there was a bit of cowardice in his nature, and, assuming as ferocious an expression as possible, he armed himself with a belaying-pin. Then, as if fearing he might not be able to cope with so desperate a fellow while having no other weapon, he ran into the cuddy for the heavy poker, Ezra asking excitedly as he came down the companion-way:

"What's there such a row about?"

"The row has n't come yet; but I reckon it will if Bob 's anywhere near right in what he 's suspectin'!" and Mr. Doak brandished the poker ferociously.

"What's he suspectin'?"

"That Jerry Bates's stowed away in our hold!"

Mr. Snow attempted to leap out of the bunk, so
great was the excitement which suddenly came upon

him at the bare suggestion that the mischief-maker might have remained on board the *Hylow*, and Abram, understanding how dangerous it was for the wounded man to indulge in any violent exertions, cried in a peremptory tone as he brandished his weapons once more:

"Get straight back there, Ezra Snow! You're in no fit shape to move 'round, an' Cap'n Ben'd light inter me terribly if he thought I'd allow anythin' of the kind! Get back there!"

"But I've got to have a hand in the takin' of that trawl-cutter, if so be he's aboard this 'ere schooner!" Ezra cried, at the same time careful to obey the cook's commands, and then, remembering what he had previously said regarding the possibility of Bates being aboard some other vessel, he added with a laugh as of relief:

"Well, there's no great need of my makin' a fool of myself, 'cause he can't be aboard! How could he get out to cut the trawls if he was?"

"It's none of my figgerin'. Bob comes back with the idee in his head that the hold must be searched, an' I've got to go with him. Now you keep quiet, Ezra, 'cause I can't have you an' Jerry Bates both on my hands at the same time!"

Then Mr. Doak went up the companion-way, and learned that Bob had lost no time in making prepara-

tions for the search. Joe Barker and Tim, both armed with belaying-pins, were standing by the open hatchway, and Ahearn himself, disdaining to use other weapons than those with which nature provided him, had stripped off his oil-skins that his movements might not be hampered!

"Come on, Abram; you're takin' as much time to get ready as if you was outfittin' for a cruise 'round the Horn. Get below there, and look lively!"

"This's none of my picnics, Bob Ahearn, so jest you go ahead an' run things. I'll keep at your back all right."

"That ain't what I want you to do," the sailor cried as he lowered himself into the hold. "You keep along on the other side, abreast of me. We'll begin the search right here."

It was by no means to the cook's liking, this scrambling around in the gloom where a desperate man might be hidden who could strike an effective blow at the moment of being discovered, thus taking the searcher at a disadvantage, and nothing save the fear that his mates would call him a coward prevented Abram Doak from crawling on deck again in the shortest possible time.

Bob plunged straight on into the darkness, heeding not the possible danger, but bent on satisfying himself as to the whereabouts of the man who had caused so much consternation among the crew of the *Hylow*. He explored every nook sufficiently large to afford a hiding-place for a cat, and then, having arrived at that space between the casks where Seth and Tim stowed away, missed his footing, striking in the fall something which squirmed beneath him.

"This way, Abram! This way! I've got the cowardly trawl-cutter! Here he is, an' now we'll show him ——"

Bob failed to finish the sentence. Bates, who must have known that search was being made for him, grappled with Ahearn as he fell, and Mr. Doak, who came to a halt immediately Bob summoned him, could hear sounds which gave token that a desperate struggle was taking place.

"Smash his head for him if he won't come out!"
Abram shouted valiantly, but making no move to go to Ahearn's assistance. "Yank him out, Bob, if so be you've really got him! I'll show him what it is to cut honest fishermen's trawls!"

Ahearn made no reply, and for the very good reason that he had quite as much business on hand as he could well attend to; for, although Bates was the under dog in the fight, he was battling desperately to overcome his adversary.

"Where are you, Mr. Doak?" Tim shouted as he

leaned over the hatch-combing, and Abram, evidently delighted at an opportunity to move away from the scene of the conflict, came up under the hatch in order to answer the question.

"Why, I'm here, Timmy; did you want me?"

"I want you?" One-one-four cried sharply.
"Why don't you go an' help Bob? There must be a big row goin' on somewhere there."

"I reckon there is, lad; but I can't see my way round clearly, an' am afraid I might do more harm than good."

"Some one must help Bob, for Bates has got a grip on him!" Tim cried excitedly, and dropping down the hatchway, at imminent danger of breaking a limb, he scrambled aft in the direction from whence the noise of the battle could be heard, giving no heed to himself, but bent only on lending aid to the brother of his friend.

"I would n't be brash, lad, for there's no tellin' what you may run up against," Abram said warningly, moving forward ever so little behind the boy, but taking good care not to come up with him. "They're splashin' round mighty lively, an' there's no tellin' what'll happen if you're a bit careless."

It was as if Tim had not heard the words, for he scrambled over the casks at full speed, dropping his weapons as the way became more difficult, and then,

understanding where the two must be because of his previous knowledge of the *Hylow*, he advanced slowly lest he should fall directly upon them.

"Where are you, Bob? Top or bottom? Why don't you sing out so's I'll know how to get in there?"

"Keep away, Timmy! Keep away, I tell you! You'll get hurt!" Ahearn cried indistinctly, and One-one-four understood that Bates, if indeed it was really he, must have a hold on Bob's throat.

"Don't you be afraid of me. I'll take care of myself. Keep his arms down if you can, so's I'll have a chance to get next to the bulkhead."

Then Tim leaped bodily down into the narrow space, landing with his feet on either side the enemy's head, and it was soon possible for him to understand fully the position of affairs.

He could not work to advantage, owing to the fact that whenever he attempted to bend forward, in order to get a hold of this fellow who was battling so desperately, he came in contact with Bob, and after trying two or three times he deliberately seated himself upon the enemy's face, striving eagerly to get hold of his throat.

"Now you're doin' it, Tim; but look out for yourself!" and because Bob spoke more distinctly Oneone-four understood that he was doing very much toward smothering the man beneath him, thus causing him to relax his hold.

While one might have counted twenty, Abram stood in painful indecision a dozen paces or more away from the scene of the conflict, and then came Bob's voice in a tone of relief:

"I reckon we've got him cowed, lad, an' in shape to be handled! Get out, if you can, an' I'll finish up this 'ere business."

CHAPTER XVII.

JERRY BATES.

"Is it really Jerry Bates?" Tim asked as he scrambled up on the casks that he might not impede Ahearn in his movements.

"It can't be anybody else hidin' down here, that's certain. Stand by to hit him over the head, if he turns rusty while I'm gettin' out."

"Bring him here!" Abram shouted furiously, now understanding that the battle was at an end. "Bring him here, an' I'll pound him inter a jelly."

"Be sure you keep far enough under the hatch so's you can run when he sneezes," Bob said just a bit impatiently, for he understood that the cook had not covered himself with glory during the search of the hold. "Now then, come out of here, Bates, an' no more funny business, or we'll handle you mighty rough! Come peaceable, an' it'll be all the better for you."

"I'll throw up my hands," the man said surlily.

"I reckon you've got the best of it now; but I've come somewhere near squarin' things with Ben Willard."

"If your idee of gettin' even with a man, 'cause he tried to make you behave decent, is cuttin' trawls an' such tricks as that, then I allow you have; but jest now I'm runnin' this thing, an' you'll walk a chalk-line till the skipper comes aboard. After that, it'll be for him to say what's to be done."

Owing to the fact that he had lost his belaying-pin while scrambling over the casks, Tim had no weapon with which to carry out Ahearn's orders in case Bates had attempted to make any more of a fight; but he stood ready nevertheless, giving no heed to his own danger, and thinking only of taking a full share of whatsoever might come.

It was not a simple matter for Bob to get his prisoner out of the narrow space, however willing the man might be to obey orders, and several minutes were spent in the effort, during which time Abram stood under the hatch where he could guard himself against any possible harm, making the most blood-curdling threats against the now subdued trawl-cutter.

"Can I lend you a hand?" Joe Barker called from the deck, and Abram replied, bending Bates's arms behind him as he gripped him firmly by the elbows, thus forcing the fellow forward:

"Pass me down a line. I'm not minded to send this sneak up till he's made fast. Then you may rig a tackle for hoistin' him out." Abram was exceedingly brave when Bob came out into the light which streamed from the hatchway, clutching his prisoner firmly with One-one-four close beside Bates ready to jump upon him at the first attempt to escape.

"I've been on your track ever since you started in at these tricks!" Mr. Doak cried, as he swung the poker vigorously. "You've played a pretty high game; but the jig is up now, an' we'll take a hand at showin' you what's what."

"Hold your tongue, Abram, an' get on deck!"
Bob cried irritably. "There's no need of overly
many words, an' surely none of threats now that
Bates has given in."

"But you'll need me here to help you."

"One-one-four is standin' ready, an' that's enough. He's the only one that has lent me a hand since we came below, an' I won't forget him for the good turn he did. I'd had the wind choked out of me, so far as help from you was concerned. Get on deck, an' 'tend to your pots an' pans, 'cause you ain't cut out for a fighter."

"I won't give in to any man, when it comes to standin' up in the daylight," Mr. Doak grumbled as he obeyed the command. "I don't allow I'm enough of a cat to make much show where it's darker'n Egypt," and as he scrambled above the

hatch-combing he heard Ezra shouting frantically:

"On deck there, some of you! Tell that lubber to let me know what's goin' on! Ahoy there!"

"Now Ezra, you're excitin' yourself, an' the cap'n said you must keep calm," Mr. Doak cried savagely. "I can't look after you an' fight Jerry Bates at the same time!"

"Was it Bates?" Ezra cried fiercely.

"Of course it was, an' we've got him where he can't help himself, the thievin' trawl-cutter! I knew all along that you fellows was n't on the right track, but when Bob began to wonder whether he might n't be aboard this 'ere schooner, I told him he was barkin' up the right tree, knowin' it must be so on 'count of the doughnuts he had stole."

"Help me out! I want to get a look at him."

"Now see here, Ezra, you'll have to lay still, or I'll serve you the same as I did Jerry Bates, even if you are a friend of mine! You know Cap'n Ben don't allow you're goin' to move 'round any. Besides, we can't have you mixed up here on deck while we've got so much to do."

Then, to make sure the wounded man would not injure himself by getting out of the bunk despite all that had been said to the contrary, Mr. Doak calmly and quietly pulled the companion-hatch over and locked it.

By this time Joe Barker had lowered the tackle; and the prisoner, bound hand and foot, was hoisted on deck.

The surly sailor looked the bully he was, when he stood helplessly leaning against the mainmast, gazing around more in anger than fear.

Bob and Tim followed immediately, and Bates said as Ahearn stood before him threateningly:

"Don't make the mistake of goin' too far with this matter, for there's such a thing as law in the land, an' if you raise your hand agin me I'll make you smart for it when we get into port!"

"If you was n't such a mean, despicable kind of a thing I'd teach you to threaten me; but I'm kind er ashamed to swap words with a trawl-cutter. Tim, pass me the main halyards, an' we'll make him fast where he stands, till Cap'n Ben comes aboard."

To this Bates made no protest; his only fear seemed to be lest Bob should attempt to inflict bodily punishment, and all else was as nothing.

"Now what're you goin' to do?" One-one-four asked when the prisoner was secured in such a manner that he could do no more than move his head.

"There's plenty of time; we'll wait till all hands come aboard. It's enough to know that we've put an end to trawl-cutting, an' deprived Ezra of a chance to figger out that there's somethin' ghostly

about the business. If the other fellows feel as I do, when they see Bates, we'll be a mighty contented crew, for to tell the truth I was beginnin' to get a bit scary. Let's mug-up, an' have a bite. I did n't stop to get more'n half a breakfast this mornin'."

"You'd better wash your face first," Tim said laughingly. "Bates must have given you a good punch in the nose, for it's bleedin' pretty near as bad as Mr. Snow's neck did, an' you don't look pretty that way."

"It strikes me you're scratched up a good bit yourself," Bob said as he pointed to Tim's cheek, which had evidently come in forcible contact with the top of a cask, for it was scraped from the forehead to the chin.

"It looks as if you an' me got all there was comin', an' Jerry Bates kept out of it," Tim said with a laugh, as he ascertained the extent of his injuries by the sense of touch.

"I did n't want to hit him full in the face when I had a chance, an' after he got hold of my throat I could n't, so that's why he came off so clean," Bob explained as he bathed his swollen nose, and otherwise made ready to "mug-up."

"Say, why have you got the cuddy locked?" Ahearn asked when he would have gone below for food and coffee.

"Ezra got ravin' 'round so I was afraid he'd come on deck spite of all I could do, an' that was the only way to make certain he'd stay where he belonged," Mr. Doak explained as he pushed back the hatch, and the wounded man cried angrily:

"I'll serve you out, Abram Doak, before this cruise's ended, for shuttin' me in here, you doughmixer! Who's up there? Some decent man I hope! Oh, it's you, eh, Bob?" he added as Ahearn descended. "Now, tell me all about it."

"I can't make any yarn, Ezra, 'cause there's nothin' to it, 'cept that we went down an' found him," Ahearn replied, laughing more merrily than he had since the first mischief was discovered. "It popped inter my head this mornin', after findin' two trawls cut, that perhaps there was more in what you an' I had been sayin' about his hidin' in some vessel than we allowed, so made up my mind that we'd search the Hylow first. The time had come when I was through work till we'd got at an end of this business. Now we've straightened it out in good shape, an' I reckon from this time on there'll be nothin' to interfere with our humpin' ourselves."

"What 're you goin' to do now you 've got him?"

"That's for the cap'n to say. It's enough for me that we know how he kept out of sight."

"Yes, but you have n't found out how he could

get away to cut the trawls, an' stay in the hold at the same time," Ezra said impatiently.

"Of course he did n't stay in the hold at the same time he cut the trawls; but I reckon it would n't be hard to figger how he could get away now an' then without our knowin' it. Jest think, Ezra! If you had had your way we should have turned the Hylow's nose for Portland harbor, thinkin' we had a whole cargo of ghosts aboard."

"An' as it is, Abram's the one who hit upon it at last! That's what surprises me."

"How did Abram hit on it?" Bob asked in surprise.

"I don't know. He jest said it was him as turned this thing up. Was n't that the idee, Abram?"

"Well, it was me as told Bob about the doughnuts, an' that give him the clue," Mr. Doak explained, but giving good evidence that he did not care to continue the conversation by retreating behind the stove-pipe, where he remained unusually silent until shouts from over the water told that the Hylow's dories were returning once more.

It is not necessary that any attempt be made at depicting the astonishment of the crew as they returned in couples at short intervals, and saw bound to the mainmast the trawl-cutter whom they had sought for so long and eagerly. Never a man among them who stopped to unload his dory; but all came inboard chattering like a troop of monkeys, as Mr. Doak afterward elegantly expressed it.

Bob refused to answer any of the many questions put to him, contenting himself by saying as he pointed to the prisoner:

"There's the sneak what frightened all hands to such an extent they'd been willin' to put back, losin' a full fare, for the sake of gettin' rid of the hoodoo which Ezra Snow swore Jim Sullivan had put on the craft. That's enough to know now; but when Cap'n Ben comes aboard you'll hear the whole story, for I'm not minded to tell it more'n once."

It pleased Ahearn to enjoy his triumph as long as might be, and a triumph it surely was, since through him all which had alarmed and perplexed the crew was at an end.

The master of the *Hylow* and Reuben Hardy were the last to pull alongside, and owing to the throng upon the schooner's deck, Captain Ben did not at first see the prisoner, but asked sharply:

"What's the meanin' of this sogerin'? Why don't you turn to an' unload the boats?"

"That's why we don't," Joe Barker replied, as he pushed aside two or three of the men that the captain might have a view of him who was lashed to the main-

mast. "We're waitin' to hear the story, for Bob won't tell it till you're here."

"Jerry Bates, by all that's good!" Captain Ben exclaimed as he turned questioningly to Bob who, without delay, explained why he had conceived the idea of searching the *Hylow's* hold, and what he had found there, not omitting a flowery account of Tim's bravery and Abram's cowardice.

"I have n't asked him any questions," Bob said in conclusion, as Captain Ben came aboard, "for I allowed that was your business. He had the nerve to threaten me with the law if I handled him too rough, so I reckon he ain't in what you might call any repentant mood yet awhile."

"Look here, Bates," Captain Ben said as he wheeled suddenly upon the prisoner. "In all my sailin' I never run across a man who was willin', for the sake of workin' spite, to do what you've done, an' I'm curious to know in what way you've counted yourself so deeply injured that you'd resort to such mean tricks?"

"I've been treated like a dog ever since I came aboard this schooner," Bates replied sullenly, and Captain Ben cried as if he was beginning to lose his temper:

"If you can show me one man who acted toward you other than as a shipmate, till the day when you

came near drownin' One-one-four, or tell me of anythin' I did to set you so against us, I'll be glad to hear it, for I hate to believe any fellow would make such a scoundrel of himself without some little reason for it."

"There's no need of my makin' talk now. You're all down on me, an' I know it."

"But until you abused Tim Jones without reason, was anythin' done to you, or against you, by a single person on this schooner?"

"I don't say as there was; but I did n't abuse the kid. What harm was there in holdin' him over the rail a bit? Besides, he needed trimmin' after bein' so funny as to tumble me over. What call had he to play any pranks on me?"

"You know very well he did n't play any pranks. It was an accident which might have happened to the oldest sailor aboard. It was only natural the men should dislike you after such an exhibition of yourself. So that's the cause of all you've done in the way of tryin' to break up this cruise? Because the men did n't take kindly to you after you had come very near drownin' one lad, an' broke the bones of another, you thought yourself warranted in destroyin' our property?"

"It don't make any difference what I thought.
I've done my part, an' now I suppose you allow you

can do yours; but I'm tellin' this, Cap'n Ben Willard: Have a care that you don't run up agin the law, for I'll take it on you as soon as we get interport."

"You won't live to see port, if we can have our way!" Joe Barker cried angrily, and Bates cried with a whine:

"That's it; all hands are ready to jump down on me!" and Captain Ben turned away impatiently, understanding that it was useless to hold further parley with such a man; but Bob prevented him from putting an end to the questioning, by saying:

"Look here, Cap'n, you'd better make him tell how he's done all this work, for the sake of quietin' the men. A good many of 'em have been willin' to think there's some ghost business in it, an' the safest plan is to clear the thing up, if that sneak'll talk."

"Bates, I'd like to have you tell me one thing," and Captain Ben wheeled sharply around. "Why did you cut our trawls? Was it only to spite us?"

"Well, there was somethin' of that in it, an' then agin, I allowed you'd have to put back to port if you lost many of 'em."

"How did you get out of the hold without our seein' you?" Bob asked, and Bates laughed as he replied:

"There was n't any trick to that, seein' how no

watch has been kept. When you fellows went below I crept on deck, got into one of the dories, an' pulled off. The only risk in it was that I might n't be able to get on board agin without bein' seen."

"But why did you send the dory adrift?"

"So's you would n't think I was here, of course. Don't you give me credit for havin' any sense?"

"That seems to be all there is to it," Captain Ben said, as he turned toward the crew. "It's a simple matter when you get right down to the bottom of it, an' yet all hands were ready to put back, believin' in Ezra's superstitious idees. A surly, ill-tempered fellow who, because he could n't brutally ill-treat a couple of boys, counts himself abused, an' you allow him to frighten you."

"Yes, that's all there is to it so far as our knowin' how the thing happened," Joe Barker said as he advanced nearer the captain, "an' now what about Bates?"

"How do you mean?"

"What's to be done with the sneak?"

"We'll take good care he can't play any more tricks, an' put him ashore when we get into port."

"What?" Reuben Hardy cried angrily. "Is nothin' more to come of this? He's to be taken home like a passenger, after all the trouble an' worry he's given us, an' then set ashore like an honest man, eh?"

"What else would you have, lads? That I swear out a warrant against him?"

"Warrant nothin'!" Joe Barker screamed.
"Turn him over to us! There's no need of gettin'
out a warrant."

"Now look here, lads, there's goin' to be nothin' of that kind aboard this schooner," and Captain Ben stood in front of the prisoner as if fearing some violence might be attempted. "You're to behave like decent men. I'll admit you've had enough to rile you up in good shape, but you sha'n't turn yourselves into brutes. If Bates is to be brought to account for what he's done, it'll be in a legal way, an' no other."

"Then we ain't allowed to serve him out in our way?" Hardy cried in a threatening tone.

"He's to be kept a prisoner," Captain Ben repeated quietly but firmly. "We'll contrive some sort of a place for him in the hold, or the cabin, where we can make sure he'll not be able to give us the slip. When we arrive in port, if you claim that he ought to be arrested for malicious mischief—an' I reckon that's about all that can be brought against him—I'll see he's turned over to the officers of the law."

The men looked at each other meaningly, and, although no one spoke, Captain Ben would have been

blind indeed if he had not understood by their silence, as well as their movements, that already a plan was being formed in their minds to inflict some punishment upon the man who had caused them so many uncomfortable hours. Jerry Bates himself must have understood somewhat of this, for he glanced from one to the other uneasily, and timidly shrank back as far as his bonds would permit, whenever any one moved toward him. He was a veritable coward, as indeed he had shown himself to be by the destruction of the trawls, and like all of his class feared bodily pain more than any legal punishment which could have been inflicted upon him.

After a few moments' hesitation the crew, heeding not the fact that the dories yet remained unloaded, gathered in little knots forward, or entered the cuddy one by one as if going below for no good purpose.

Captain Ben, who had noted all this as he came to a halt near the after-companion, without seeming to watch the men, beckoned for Bob Ahearn, saying as the latter came up:

"Unless all signs fail we're like to have trouble in tryin' to act decently by Jerry Bates, an' I'm dependin' upon you more'n any other to stand by me."

"I don't say I won't do it," Bob replied slowly and hesitatingly; "but there's a big doubt in my

mind whether you've got any right to prevent the men from workin' their will on yonder sneak. He's come mighty nigh breakin' up the cruise entirely; through him we've lost, on a rough guess, from five to ten thousand of fish, an' it ain't human nature for them to coddle the villain after findin' him."

"Whether I've a right or not remains to be seen!" and now Captain Ben spoke angrily. "As I told them, there shall be no brutality aboard this schooner. We'll either take the fellow back to Portland, an' put him before the court, or land him somewhere hereabouts; but nothin' more. Now if you're of the mind that it's necessary to play the part of a brute, say so, an' I'll tackle this thing single-handed, for certain it is that the crew'll have to get rid of me before they can work their will on that man!"

"I'll stand by you, Cap'n, although it goes mightily agin the grain. I'm allowin' that I'm no more brutal than the average run of men, but when you consider how he's worked us up, without rhyme or reason, you can't wonder that all hands kick against his goin' scot free."

"There's much of truth in what you say, Bob; but at the same time I hold to the stand I've taken. You agree to stick by me? Then one or the other of us must be on deck while Bates is aboard."

"So we're to turn nurse an' coddle him, eh?" Bob asked bitterly.

"You know what I mean. After your anger has had time to cool, you'll look at the matter as I do. We'll give the crew a chance to chew it over for a half an hour or so, an' then it's a case of all hands turnin' to with a will."

Captain Ben went below, and Bob muttered to himself as he walked forward, turning his head away when he passed the prisoner at the mainmast lest he be tempted to break the promise given:

"He don't dare set them to unloadin' the dories yet a while, an' that's a fact. They're ripe for almost anythin' in the way of mischief, if so be there's a chance of servin' Bates out, an' I can't say as I blame 'em."

The most excited man aboard the *Hylow* was Ezra Snow, and the fact that he could not get out of the bunk to take part in whatsoever might be done, only served to add to his impatience because the crew had not already taken the matter into their own hands.

"Goin' to take him back to port like he was a howlin' swell?" he cried when Reuben Hardy reported what Captain Ben had said. "We're to wait on him from now out, an' look after his health, I s'pose, so's he sha'n't take cold or get dyspepsey! We're goin' to stand by while that bloomin' trawl-

cutter goes scot free! Things have come to a pretty pass when we've got to take our hats off to a sneak like Bates, after he has run his rig."

"Perhaps you would n't like to say that to Cap'n Ben?" Abram suggested, taking care, however, to get behind the stove-pipe lest Mr. Snow should be tempted to fling at his head anything within reach.

"I'd like to see a skipper I did n't dare to talk to, when he was coddlin' such a sneak as Jerry Bates!" Ezra cried savagely. "Ain't we got any rights aboard this 'ere schooner, or are we a set of miserable slaves what are bound to sneeze when the cap'n gets cold?"

"Well, now, Ezra, just what would you do if it was possible to move 'round?" Reuben Hardy asked seriously.

"I'd get the boys together, have 'em agree to put off to-morrow mornin' just the same as ever, an' after makin' certain Cap'n Ben could n't see what was goin' on, instead of runnin' the trawls, I'd snoop back to the schooner an' serve Bates out."

"Yes, but how would you serve him out?"

"Let every man give him fifteen or twenty good sound cuts on the bare back with a bit of a half-inch rope, an' by the time that'd been done properly I reckon he would n't have the stomach to cut any more trawls."

"I reckon your plan is a good one," Joe Barker said approvingly, "an' there's nothin' to prevent us from carryin' it out. Let's turn to an' unload the dories now, actin' as if we was willin' to stand the cap'n's orders. Then dress down, an' if nothin' happens after that we can settle on what time we'd best put back to-morrow mornin'."

Ten minutes later Captain Ben was surprised by seeing the men voluntarily return to their work, each jumping to it as if he had no other thought in mind than that of getting a full fare aboard the schooner at the earliest possible moment, and he said to himself with an air of satisfaction:

"They worked 'round into shape sooner than I expected, an' it 's a mighty good thing, for there 's no knowin' what might have happened if they 'd turned rusty."

Bob Ahearn, however, could have explained the situation in a way which would have caused Captain Ben decided uneasiness, for he overhead much of the conversation carried on in the galley, and had a very good idea of what plan was afoot.

"I reckon I'd best hold my tongue for a spell, an' see how she works. It's a shame to put anythin' in the way of their doin' what's needed; but the trouble is that my promise holds me on the other side."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE HOME PORT.

It was as if the weather intervened to save Jerry Bates from the punishment he deserved, and which he would have in due time received.

Before midnight the wind began to breeze up as it hauled around to the northeast, and the fish already aboard had not been cared for when Captain Ben sent out four of the dories to take in the trawls.

"I'm allowin' there 'll be no fishin' done to-morrow mornin', if I 've read the glass aright, an' it stands us in hand to make ready for heavy weather. Jump lively to it, boys, an' get back as soon as may be, for Sable Island is a lee shore with the wind as it threatens."

With a full half of the crew in the dories, the work of dressing down lagged, and the gray light of a new day could already be seen in the eastern sky when the last of the take had been salted.

By this time the dories had returned bringing the trawls, and also a considerable number of fish, all of which it was necessary to care for at once, for now the wind was whistling through the rigging ominously, while the waves rolled high as they put on their white caps, giving even Tim to understand that there was a decided "break in the weather."

All this while Jerry Bates had remained lashed to the mainmast. Early in the morning Abram fed him grudgingly with fried fish and potatoes, seasoning the meal with his comments upon trawl-cutters in general and Mr. Bates in particular, until the latter must have come to realize more fully than ever before the truth of the words:

"Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith."

When the dories had been hoisted in-board and nested, a half a dozen of the men were at work dressing down the catch last brought in. Captain Ben ordered Bob to make arrangements in the hold for the safe-keeping of the prisoner, and Ahearn, understanding what might take place, but not willing to betray his mates, said hesitatingly:

"It stands to reason, Cap'n, that I should know more about what's goin' on jest at present than you, an' I'm allowin' if you want to keep Bates safe an' sound, he'll be better off in the cabin."

"It'll be a bother to have him 'round there," Captain Ben said half to himself, and Bob added grimly:

"Ay, so it will; but I'm thinkin' it's the only place if you don't want that he should be mussed up."

The captain of the *Hylow* understood that Bob had good reason for speaking as he did, and, therefore, without further parley set about making ready a bunk for the reception of the prisoner, after which he was carried below, still bound securely.

"It's goin' to be a good bit of work lookin' after that scoundrel," the skipper said as he and Bob finished the task, and stood looking down upon the surly sailor, who had never opened his mouth while being carried below, as if believing his silence might be annoying. "But it's better we put ourselves out a good bit than have it said we did n't know how to behave as honest men should."

"I'm standin' by ready to obey orders, Cap'n,"
Bob replied sharply, "an' whatever you say goes, but
it's jest as well to understand that I don't hold to it
we're actin' like honest men. It seems to me like
a chump trick to be so careful of him."

"Think what you please, Ahearn, so long as you stand up like a man behind me. I'm guessin' from what you did n't say that it'll be safer for him if one or the other of us stays aft here while we're under way."

"That's about the size of it," Bob replied grimly, as he went out of the cabin to lend a hand to those who were dressing down, for unless the crew of the *Hylow* were willing to take more chances than was

wise or safe, it stood them in hand to get the schooner under way very shortly. Already had she begun to drag the single anchor, and with shoals everywhere around further delay might find them in such a position that the most skilful seamanship would be of no avail.

Ezra Snow was in a particularly bad temper because it had become necessary to weigh anchor, and he had no hesitation in giving word to his wrath:

"To think that we've been layin' here in what you might call a dead calm huntin' for that beastly Bates, an' now jest when we've found him, an' are gettin' ready to deal out the dose he deserves, up comes a bloomin' easterly wind that keeps the cap'n aboard! If the crew of this 'ere schooner were sich men as used to fish these banks, it'd make mighty little difference whether Ben Willard was around or not, so far as servin' out a trawl-cutter was concerned!"

"It's no use for you to kick agin the weather, Ezra," Mr. Doak said soothingly. "When she gets ready to blow she's goin' to blow, whether you like it or not, an' I can't see's you're in any hard lines, 'cause there's like to be many a long day before we're homeward bound, when the cap'n won't be 'round to interfere. Kind er keep your feelin's down, else that cut in your neck'll give you a heap of trouble. I

declare for it, if I had two sich men as you in the cuddy I'd go stark, starin' mad, for it's nothin' but fret, fret, fret, from mornin' till night, an' all about that imitation fisherman that ain't worth one wag of your tongue."

"Now look here, Abram, you don't want to stir me up, 'cause I ain't in the mood to hear any of your idle talk. I 've got to lay here helpless as a log, figgerin' how we can give Bates a lesson that he won't forget."

"Well, I allow you'll have time enough, Ezra, 'cordin' to all the weather predictions that are floatin' 'round this 'ere schooner, for it seems to be the opinion of all hands that the season is turned upside down, an' we're gettin' nor'easters when we ought'er have southerly breezes."

"It's all in keepin' with the rest," Mr. Snow muttered. "First comes Jim Sullivan with his cheap talk to give the cruise a black eye. Then Seth breaks his leg, an' me bein' cut within an inch of my life, till I declare I can't untangle things. There's some mighty bad sign in all this, but I'm 'fraid I won't be able to come at it till it's too late to prevent everythin' from goin' to smash."

At this point Tim entered the cuddy with the report that things had been made snug for putting to sea. "We'll be jumpin' to it in a minute now," he said gleefully. "I wanted to stay on deck to see 'em make sail, but Bob Ahearn would have it I must come below, jest as if I could n't take care of myself by this time, no matter how much of a sea is bein' kicked up."

"You're safer below, One-one-four, for you don't rightly know how a craft of this size, in shoal water sich as we have on the Banks, can jump 'round when the wind 's jest right for it, an' I allow Cap'n Ben'll drive her till he gets water enough under the keel," and Mr. Doak set about securing everything that was in danger of fetching away.

Then Tim gave his whole attention to Seth, who had not ventured to make any conversation while the men were at such a pitch of excitement and anger, and the lad whispered in a tone of relief as he pressed Tim's hand:

"I'm mighty glad to have somebody to talk with, Timmy, for it's been awful hearin' the men threatenin' what they'll do to Bates, an' Mr. Snow's the worst of the whole lot. Do you believe they'll murder him?"

"He ought'er be half killed," Tim replied, feeling quite as bitter against Bates as did any of the crew; but I don't allow they'll do him any harm while we're under way, for Cap'n Ben's made up his

mind, an' I guess he's jest like a mule when he gets started."

It was a case of "all hands on deck" until the Hylow was in deep water, and as he peered now and then out through the companion-hatch, Tim understood why Bob had insisted so strongly upon his going below. As the schooner ran southward to clear the shoals it was as if she literally lay on one side, and the boiling, yeasty waves seemingly had free sweep over her from port to within four or five feet of the starboard rail. Life-lines were hove, for the man who missed his footing on that steep deck could have looked for no aid from his mates, and Ahearn and Joe Barker, who stood at the wheel, were lashed there firmly, now and then only the upper part of their bodies showing above the swirl of the waters.

"This gale seems to be worse than the other," Tim said as he stepped back into the cuddy, and Ezra explained:

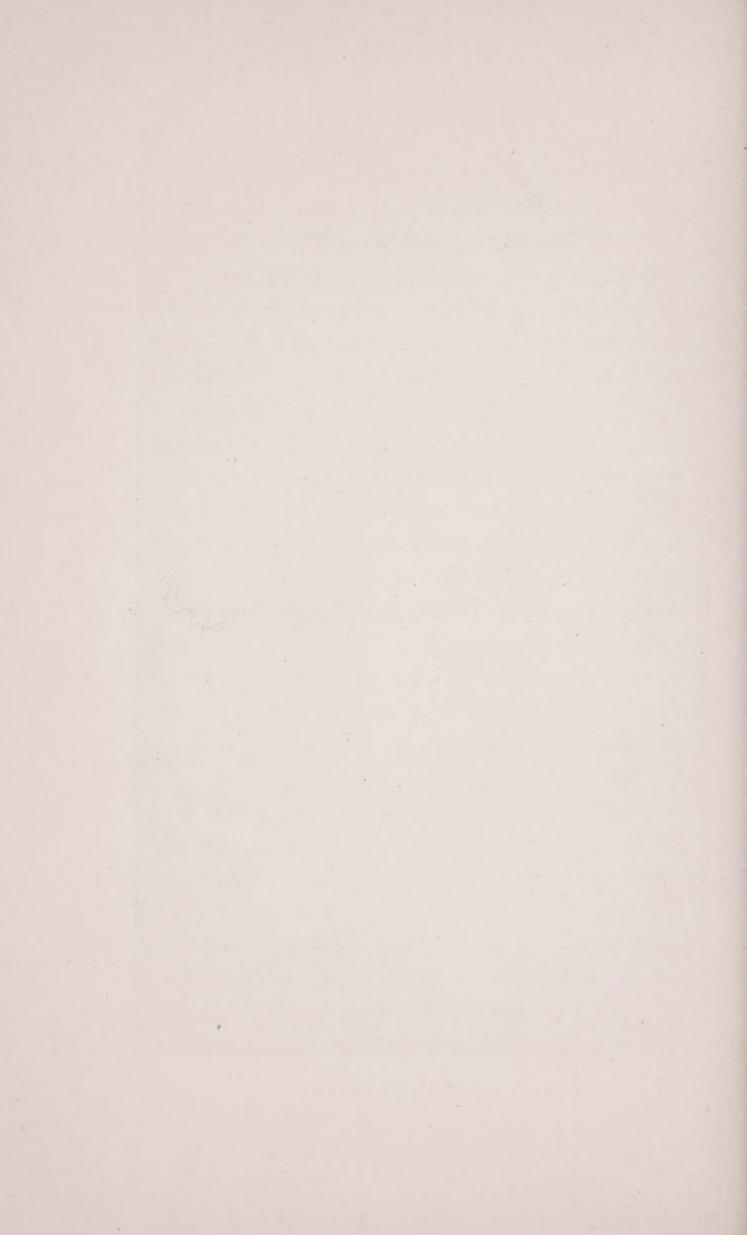
"It's 'cause we're on the Banks, lad, an' the sea's always nastier in shoal water; but once let us get a good offin' an' she'll ride more easy."

Two hours later Ahearn and his dory-mate came forward to mug-up, and the former said in reply to Ezra's questions:

"It looks to me mightily as if the cap'n was countin' on makin' Halifax, most likely to get rid of Bates.



THE "HYLOW" IN BAD WEATHER



Otherwise we would n't be runnin' before it as we have been since she was hauled 'round."

This information excited Ezra Snow's ire anew, and he declaimed against the captain's caring so tenderly for the prisoner, until even those of his mates who were much in the same way of thinking grew weary of so many words, and insisted that he "give his tongue a rest."

If the crew of the *Hylow* could have heard the conversation which took place in the cabin shortly after the schooner was put before the wind, they might have been even more bitter in their denunciation of Captain Ben, for he did neither more nor less than bargain with the man who had striven his best to make of the cruise a failure.

"There's no need for me to say, Bates, that the men are bent on givin' you the roughest kind of an overhaulin', an' you'd been in their hands yesterday if I had n't stood strong against it."

"Nobody asked you to interfere," the prisoner said in a surly tone, and Captain Ben, evidently striving to control his temper, replied:

"That's true, an' it's also a fact that I don't stand between you an' them because of thinkin' they're in the wrong. It'd be no more'n simple justice if I should let them have their will on you. What I'm drivin' at is to keep 'em from doin' what

they 'd be ashamed of later. You deserve all that 's comin' your way, an' perhaps if this was n't the first cruise of the *Hylow*, I might n't be makin' so strong a stand. As it is, however, I'm minded to put you ashore if you'll sign a paper showin' that you went of your own free will, with no claim against the vessel whatsoever."

"You must think I'm a fool to sign away what's comin' to me by rights."

"You can do as you please; but I'm tellin' you there 's nothin' belongin' to you by rights, except the floggin' all hands are achin' to give. If I carry you to the home port, it'll be a case of gettin' a warrant against you, an' unless I'm out of my reckonin', you'll serve six months, if not more, for malicious mischief, with never a show of a dollar comin' your way. I'm not goin' to beg of you, 'cause I'm only doin' this thing to save your skin, an' I'll not give you another chance. If you're minded to do as I've said, I'll set the course for Halifax; but it'll be a case of puttin' you ashore at the entrance of the harbor, for I've promised not to make port on this cruise, 'cept I was driven to it by stress of weather."

Bates remained silent a full minute, and taking this as proof that he did not intend to follow the advice given, Captain Ben turned to go on deck.

"Hold on! I'll sign what you've been talkin'

'bout; but it's a low down trick to play on a man."

"You can't rightly call yourself a man after all that's been done, Bates, an' I'm makin' a fool of myself by tryin' to get you out of the scrape with whole bones. But it shall be done, for, while I'm not as superstitious as is Ezra, it looks to me a good deal like bad luck to let the men work their will on you, however much you deserve the harshest treatment that can be dealt out."

Then the captain wrote that which Bates had agreed to sign, taking precautions lest the *Hylow* should be liable for the wages alleged to be due, and the trawl-cutter's bonds were so far released as to admit of his signing the paper.

An hour later, when Bob came aft, the captain told him what he proposed to do, and Ahearn, without making any comment, said in a questioning tone:

"Then you're really goin' to make port after all?"

"Not a bit of it. He shall be set ashore jest inside the harbor, an' there'll be a cleaner taste in my mouth after we're rid of the scoundrel. I'm free to admit that the men have every right to be angry because of my interference; but it's the first cruise of the Hylow, Bob——"

"Yes, I know how you feel, Cap'n. The best of us are superstitious now an' then. Who's to set Bates ashore?"

- "I can't trust any one but you."
- "Are you allowin' I'll do it alone?"
- "Oh, no! Take Joe Barker. You can keep him straight, can't you?"
- "I won't answer for it; but I'll keep straight myself, an' that ought'er be promise enough."

Now, lest we are spending too many words over Jerry Bates, let us come to an end of him, so far as the *Hylow* and her crew are concerned, as speedily as possible, by saying that during the next night the schooner stood inside Halifax harbor only so far as was necessary to find comparatively still water, and then Ahearn and Barker pulled ashore with the trawl-cutter, who still remained fettered lest he should be so unwise as to make any resistance.

When he was brought on deck the crew of the *Hylow* were not chary in expressing their opinion of him, and in telling what they would do by way of reprisal at some future time; but he very wisely refrained from making any reply.

Nearly an hour elapsed before Bob and Joe returned. Then the dory was hoisted in-board, and the schooner sailed out into the night and the storm.

When Ahearn went into the cuddy for a mug of coffee, Ezra asked eagerly:

- "What did you do to the reptile?"
- "I never put my finger on the duffer, 'cept to help

lift him ashore, 'cause I'd given my word to Cap'n Ben."

- "Then he got off scot free after all."
- "Well, as to that I can't say, Ezra. Joe staid behind to take off the ropes, an' I pulled out from the shore a bit, so 's the dory should n't rub on the rocks. What Joe might have done I would n't say; but he was night to half an hour untyin' three or four knots, in case that 's all he did."
- "I untied 'em all right," Joe added, and Ezra cried anxiously:
 - "Did you give him one for me, lad?"
- "There was n't time to square up all the accounts; but I reckon he won't cut any more trawls belongin' to this schooner," Joe Barker replied, and there the conversation regarding Jerry Bates ended on board the Hylow, save when Ezra, having nothing better to do, spent his time in explaining how it was his intention to serve the trawl-cutter out if he should be so fortunate as to come across at some time in the future.

And now, because from the time Jerry Bates was set ashore until the *Hylow* was made fast at Custom-house wharf, full to the hatches, nothing of particular interest occurred, it seems best to make no attempt at describing all that took place while she remained on Sable Island Bank.

There were good fishing days and bad fishing days; times when the dories returned from the trawls laden to the gunwale, and then again came in with only half a catch; but whether the luck was good or bad, the crew were all the while adding to the cargo until the day came when it seemed impossible to jam another cask into her hold. During this time Ezra had so far recovered from his wound as to be on deck, but Captain Ben would not permit him to do any heavy work, and Seth, with a pair of crutches fashioned by Bob Ahearn, could, when the *Hylow* remained on an even keel, move about very nearly at will.

In fact, as Tim expressed it, "the hospital was shut down," and save for Mr. Snow's ardent desire to "have it out" with Bates at some future time, every person aboard the schooner was in the best of spirits when she made Monhegan.

One-one-four had no fear as to the future, because in a conversation with Captain Ben during the run the latter had said to him:

"Bob Ahearn shall go home with you an' explain to your parents just how it happened that you stowed away aboard the schooner. An' he's to do more than that, One-one-four, for I 've told him to ask your father's permission for you to ship with me another cruise."

"Would you really want me to come, Cap'n Ben?"
Tim cried as his eyes glistened with joy.

"Indeed I would, lad, an' I'll give you a fair lay. I don't know what kind of a fist you may have made at the district-messenger business but I'll say this for you, that I never saw a lad aboard ship who was more ready an' willin' to work than you. I'm countin' that by this time next year, if so be you stick to fishin', your lay 'll be as big as Ahearn's, an' that 's sayin' a good bit, for there's no better fisherman on the Maine coast than that same Bob."

"What do you s'pose we're goin' to do with Seth?" Tim asked, thinking of his friend even at the moment of his own triumph.

"Of course the lad's got no hold on us, seein' 's he was a stowaway, an' has not been able, on 'count of gettin' his leg broke, to do any part of the work; but all the same we of the Hylow kind er look on him as belongin' to us. It's agreed that every man is to pay his share, with the schooner's three shares, for his keep till he can come across his uncle, an' I'll 'tend to the business of lettin' his folks know where he is. There ain't any question but that your mother 'll take him to board till his affairs are straightened out, 'cause he's as good-natured an' harmless as a kitten—a lad who would n't be in anybody's way however much of a hullaballoo was goin' on. Bob'll explain

all that to your folks, so I reckon it can be settled without any trouble."

Tim did not stop to ask any questions concerning his own future, so eager was he to impart the good tidings to Seth, for the lad had been decidedly anxious, ever since the schooner was homeward bound, concerning the possibility of his being able to provide for himself while yet a cripple.

"My, but Cap'n Ben has fixed it nice!" Seth said with a long-drawn sigh of relief when Tim breath-lessly repeated that which had been said to him, "an' to think that the crew are willin' to help me out!"

"Why should n't they be, lad? It ain't often we buck up agin such a decently behaved kid as you are," Abram said in a fatherly tone as he set about making the last chowder of the cruise. "I ain't sayin' but that you might'er turned out different if your leg had n't been broken an' you could 've toddled 'round to get into mischief; but I 'm free to admit that you stood the hurt better 'n anybody I ever heard of, an' the little this 'ere crew will have to put out for your keep ain't a drop in the bucket as compared with the soothin' influence you 've had on 'em."

"I'd like to know how I've soothed anybody?"
Seth said, half laughing, half crying.

"Why, lad, it was jest like takin' a dose of pare-

goric to see you layin' there in the bunk with your leg tied up, an' never a whimper out of your mouth. Time an' time agin I 've gone to sleep jest by lookin' at you, you was so soothin' like."

"Say, Seth," Tim cried merrily, "if all Abram says is true, I wonder why you could n't let yourself out for babies to look at when they get to cuttin' up."

"I'll venture to say he would n't make a bad fist at that kind of business," Mr. Snow exclaimed, entering the cuddy just at this moment. "After I've settled with Jim Sullivan for biddin' me good-bye, an' tanned the hide of Jerry Bates in behalf of the crew as well as myself, an' 'tended to two or three other little things of that kind, I'm goin' to spend a good deal of time with Seth while we're ashore, seein's how I ain't overly strong an' have got to take pretty good care of myself, so if there's any show of his goin' inter the baby-soothin' business I'll be on hand to give him a recommend."

The Hylow had a head wind for entering Portland harbor, but Captain Ben refused the assistance of a tug-boat that hailed him, saying that a few hours more or less would make very little difference in the sale of his cargo, and the steamer went on her noisy way, reporting on arrival that Captain Ben Willard was off Portland Head. All of which serves to ac-

count for what, a short time later, Tim and Seth thought very curious.

When the *Hylow* was being docked at Custom-house wharf, and the two boys stood on the deck wondering why there had been so little change in the appearance of the city during their absence, Tim cried excitedly as he pointed to one of two men who were watching the schooner:

"There's father! How do you s'pose he happened to be here jest at this time?"

"There's Uncle Joshua!" Seth exclaimed. "He must have been waitin' right here for me ever since he came from Liverpool!"

"Hello, Cap'n Willard! I see you've got a boy of mine aboard there," Mr. Jones cried, greeting the master of the *Hylow* as an old friend, and the latter replied:

"We've got him all right, Jones, an' count on keepin' him, if so be you don't make too many objections. Come aboard, an' we'll tell you the story. He's been a little worked up fearin' that you might think he deliberately run away from home."

Ten minutes later Tim and Seth were wondrously happy boys, one nestling by the side of his father, and the other standing with his uncle's arm affectionately around his neck, and then came explanations which, since they were interrupted by many questions and exclamations of surprise, it seems best to set down in as few words as possible.

Seth's uncle arrived in Portland on the steamer following the *Levonia*, and there had little difficulty in learning the whereabouts of his nephew. The officers of the steamship made thorough search after discovering that he had escaped, and by dint of questioning had come to know that he was last seen on Custom-house wharf near the schooner *Hylow*.

They had, in their investigations, seen Tim's father who, when the lad failed to return home at the proper time, went directly to them with the story which One-one-four had told his mother. After this it was easy to guess that the two lads had sailed, whether by permission or not, with Captain Willard.

Then came Seth's uncle, and he as a matter of course made inquiries for his nephew at the office of the steamship, whereupon all that they had learned was told. It was only necessary for him to visit the Jones family in order to have every fear regarding his nephew set at rest. Then he went home, for, singularly enough, it was in Portland that he lived, and if the officers of the steamship had bethought themselves to look in the city directory they would

have found printed there the name "Joshua Garland, Manufacturer of Marine Hardware."

Mr. Jones, who was in the employ of the Grand Trunk Railway, had left word along the water front that he be notified whenever Captain Ben Willard was reported, and the tug having brought news of the schooner's arrival, he and Mr. Garland were enabled to meet the stowaways as the vessel came into dock.

After all this had been told, Seth was eager to know how it chanced that his uncle had apparently deserted him, and the matter was explained in a few words. Mr. Garland, on going ashore from the steamer after leaving Seth in the cabin, had asked one of the employees on the dock as to the precise time when the *Levonia* would depart, and the man, ignorant or careless, had replied readily, as if there was no question whatsoever about it:

"She'll start at two o'clock."

As a matter of fact the advertised time for sailing was one P.M., and promptly at that hour her voyage was begun. Mr. Garland arrived at the dock ten minutes too late.

Seth had no desire to become a fisherman, preferring rather to go into his uncle's office with a view to learning the business; but Master Jones, whose par-

ents had been won over to the scheme since his heart seemed so thoroughly set upon it, was allowed to ship for the second cruise the *Hylow* made. How well he succeeded it is impossible to say, because the schooner will probably not return for two weeks or more, but when she does come any information which may be desired concerning him will be cheerfully given.

On the day she sailed Seth was, as can readily be fancied, on the deck to see his friend set off as a real fisherman, and the two lads were talking privately a few minutes before the schooner was hauled out into the stream, when Ezra Snow's head appeared in the cuddy-companion, as he cried sharply:

"Have a care there, Seth; put a stopper on your tongue if you've any idee of sayin' good-bye, for you know what them words brought us the first cruise."

"Did you see Jim Sullivan?" Seth asked with a laugh, and Ezra replied ruefully:

"That I did, lad; but as luck would have it Cap'n Ben's old black cat came rubbin' 'round my legs five minutes before I met him, an' the consequence was that he pretty nigh fitted me out for the horspitle."

"Have you seen anything of Jerry Bates?"

"There, now you're comin' to what I call the worst kind of a hard luck story! You know there was a new moon night before last, an' I must needs go an' see it over my left shoulder full an' plain.

Then, lo an' behold, half an hour later, who should I stagger up agin but that bloomin' trawl-cutter. My eye's got over bein' black now, but it was a sight for a while. I'm countin' things'll run better this cruise, 'cause I crossed my fingers an' got 'em on a hunch-backed man jest the very minute I spit, so 'cordin' to all the signs, this's goin' to be a lucky cruise."

THE END.

